

The Cuvrybrache as Free Place

The diverse meanings of a wasteland in Berlin

Jan van Duppen

Master thesis Urban Geography University Utrecht July 2010

First Supervisors
Dr. G.S. Bolt University Utrecht
Dr. B. Spierings University Utrecht

Second supervisor Prof. Dr. J. Lossau Humboldt University Berlin

contact: janvanduppen@gmail.com

© Jan van Duppen 2010

This material may not be reproduced, displayed, modified or distributed without the express prior written

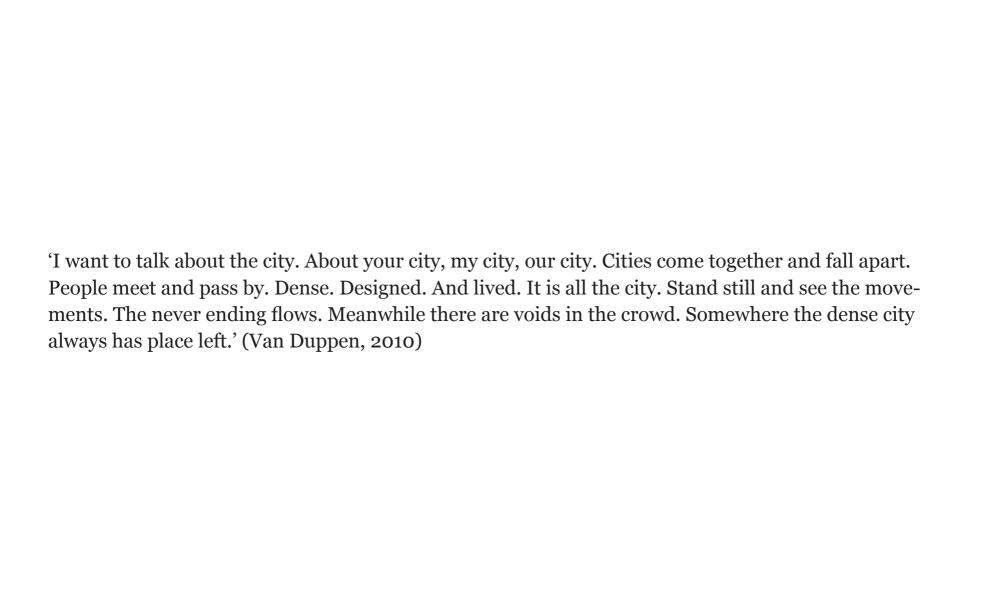
permission of the author

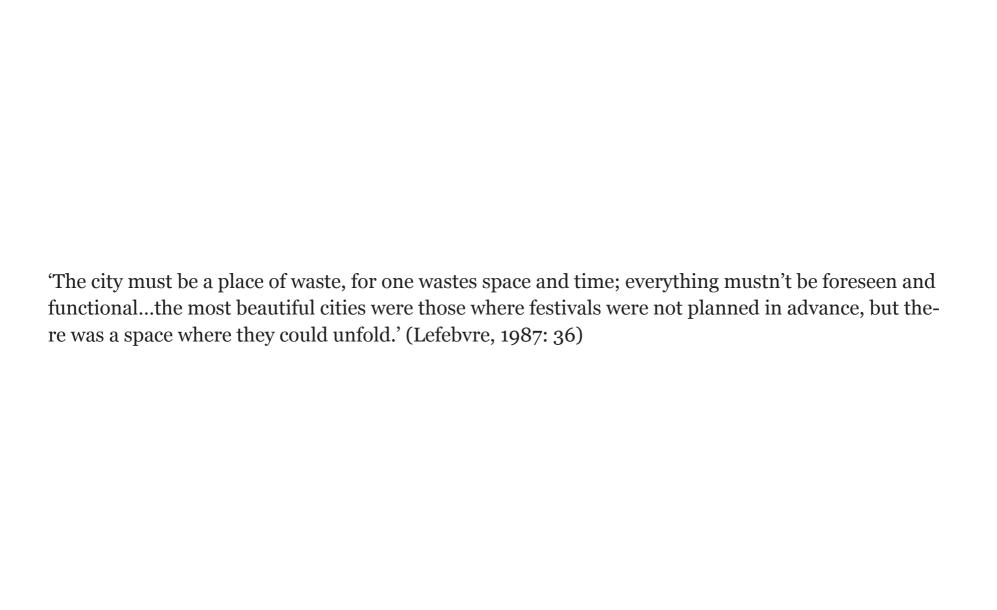
Foreword

I am happy to present to you this master thesis, which is part of the master program Urban Geography at the University Utrecht. *The Cuvrybrache as free place* considers the diverse meanings of a temporary used wasteland in Berlin. For this research, I have done fieldwork and analysis in Berlin between July 2009 till June 2010. I believe that this study period abroad enriched the research results.

First of all, I want to thank the research participants for their cooperation with this research. The conversations I had with the Cuvrybrache visitors and the urban professionals helped me to understand the place and gave me the enthusiasm to keep on working. I hope that readers will, just like me, be overwhelmed by the diversity and richness of their stories. Furthermore, I want to express my appreciation for the help and guidance I received from my supervisors: Bas Spierings (Utrecht University), Gideon Bolt (Utrecht University) and Julia Lossau (Humboldt University Berlin). In addition, I am very grateful to the following friends that supported me with design, redaction, and contacts: Bas, Claudia, Dennis, Erik, Hans, Hein, Jaap, Jule, Jonas, Lutz, Mirte, Sabine and Tim. Last but not least, I want to thank my mother, family and friends for their help and the sometimes needed distraction.

Δ

















1	6

1. Introduction	17	7.2 Paths and projects - Movement maps	110
1.1 Fragmentation of the urban field	17	7.3 Activities and locales – behavioural maps	116
1.2 Reclaim Urbanity	18	7.4 Spatial practices at the Cuvrybrache	134
1.3 Meanings of place	18	8. The Cuvrybrache as free place	137
1.4 Indeterminate spaces and Berlin	19	8.1 Sense of freedom – 'You can just go here and do whatev	
1.5 Research question	19	you want to'	146
1.6 Selection of the Case	20	8.2 Lack of Programming – 'It's not a park'	154
1.7 Scientific Relevance	21	8.2.1 No conceptual grab handles - 'It's got nothing to do wi	th all
1.8 Societal relevance	22	of these sort of affordances of the city.'	154
1.9 Materials and Methods	23	8.3 Physical structure – 'Dirty. Empty. Wild. With all the bushes.	
2. Threatened diversity and liveability	25	Cool.'	161
2.1 Fragmentation of the city	26	8.4 Hang-out, relax and dream away – 'Sittin' on the dock of	the
2.2 Neoliberalism	27	bay'	194
3. Reclaim the city	31	8.5 My place versus Social Platform – 'Und das da ist für mich	ein
3.1 Characteristics of Indeterminate spaces	31	Schlupfloch'	205
3.2 Valuable for the city – unstable meanings	40	8.6 Space for Subcultures – 'It's like a wild gallery'	210
3.3 Indeterminate spaces and temporary use in Berlin	53	8.7 Presence of the past – 'Yeah, and this I also will never for	
4. Meanings of Place	55		262
4.1 What is space? What is place?	55	8.8 Media Spree and Neue Spreespeicher – 'They're not think	
4.2 Production of space and place	61	about other values that are also nice of cities'	265
4.3 Put into practice	63	8.9 Conclusion	271
4.4 Construction of meaning	66	9. Conclusion	277
5. Research Design and Methods	71	9.1 Conceived space – Neue Spreespeicher and Media Spre	
5.1 Conceptual models and research design	71	9.2 Interrelated concepts: activities, perceptions and stories	278
5.2 Research methods	72	9.3 Spatial practices	279
5.3 Research design and data gathering	74	9.4 Free place	280
5.4 Analysis of the data	81	9.5 The socio-cultural value of an indeterminate space	280
6. The conceived space of the Cuvrybrache	85	9.6 Conflict between economic and socio-cultural value	281
6.1 Historical overview of urban plans and functions	85	9.7 Recommendations for the future	283
6.2 Media Spree – a neoliberal urban planning project	95	9.8 Places – diverse and unstable	284
6.3 Near future and the production of space	102	9.9 Future research	285
·	105	10. Wasted? Stories from a free place	289
7. Spatial Practices at the Cuvrybrache	105	List of references	305
7.1 The informal users - Population Counts	105		



Figure 1: Abandoned industrial building, Strahlau, Berlin Source: van Duppen, 2008

1. Introduction

The topic of this research is the temporary use of wastelands. These leftover spaces are situated outside the rush and flow of the city. If one looks thoroughly, they can be found in every city. It is at these sites that new developments can take place. Abandoned railway tracks, old industrial buildings, empty plots, and leftover offices are waiting for new use. These sites can be defined as indeterminate spaces: their destination is yet unknown, they are in-between. The indeterminate spaces are open to initiatives. These places have no fixed function. With their vague appearance they invite people to be creative, but also frighten others to enter. Inhabitants reclaim urban life at these sites by organising parties, workshops, sport tournaments, and other activities. As a result of these bottom-up activities, new meanings are attached to places.

Figure 1 provides an example of a new kind of use of an abandoned site. The old industrial building is situated along the Fischzugstrasse and the Glassbläserallee in the former East Berlin. It was formerly used for economic purposes. Currently, a wide variety of activities are performed at this site. When I visited the site, some people were playing paintball on the top of the building, others just took their dog for

a walk. I saw joggers running through the open land and stood in the fragments of broken beer bottles that point to some gathering of youth the night before. Each user gave new meaning to the site. Through their activities, new meanings are constructed. What formerly was an industrial site is now a place to take your dog for a walk. In this master thesis, I will carry out an exploration of a temporary used wasteland. In an attempt to represent a collection of meanings, I intend to underline the importance of these kind of sites for the liveability of a city.

1.1 Fragmentation of the urban field

The indeterminate spaces are situated within a volatile urban context. These 'empty' spaces offer opportunities for temporary use and wait for new official functions within contemporary divided cities. The volatile urban context can be portrayed as an archipelago of enclaves. Each enclave is used by a single group with one particular function, which creates a mono-cultural space. Neoliberal politics have an important role within this volatile urban context. Harvey has written extensively on the uprising of neoliberalism and its consequences. In this respect it is essential that the city

government used to be a *manager* and changed its attitude into an *entrepreneur*(Harvey, 1989). When neoliberalism became the dominant paradigm, cities perceived each other as competitors. Tourists, fun shoppers, new citizens needed to be attracted in an intense competitive environment. For this reason, city governments are not longer primarily concerned with the whereabouts of their citizens. Instead, they focus on producing attractive consumer spaces. As a consequence urban planners are all ears towards the market. Public-private partnership is *the* keyword within planning. In their suggested search for open planning processes ordinary citizens are neglected in favour of the elite, Swyngedouw speaks of a democratic deficit created by the privatization of urban governance (Swyngedouw et al., 2009).

1.2 Reclaim Urbanity

The neoliberal politics directly influence public spaces in cities. 'Control of public space is a central strategy of neoliberalism' as Smith and Low phrase it (Low & Smith, 2006, p. 15). Control is reflected in constraints on use, exclusion of marginal groups, CCTV surveillance, and forbidden demonstrations at public spaces. Is this really the future for the city? Full of homogeneous controlled spaces? Does the occurrence of the archipelago of enclaves mean the dead of a vibrant urban life? A city without occasional contact between different

people and the absence of spontaneous events? Or are there still new initiatives? Citizens who reclaim urbanity in the face of a neoliberal government? Do subcultures demand and take their own spaces? Are new heterogeneous spaces created outside the commodified, secured public spaces, on the edges, at the spaces in between? Yes, it does happen. Despite the power of economics and politics, citizens reclaim urbanity. Initiative and creativity do sustain a liveable city. This research attempts to shed light on such a reclamation of urbanity.

1.3 Meanings of place

As this research focuses on the reclamation of urbanity by citizens, they are at the centre of analysis. In order to investigate the multiple meanings of an indeterminate space, its users are observed and interviewed. Processes of defining meaning are complex. Perception, body, social group, politics, and history all play a role in this. People attach meanings to places and the places incorporate these meanings. For example, the street corner where you played as a kid or the bench in the park where you first kissed your love will always convey these memories for you. It is through actions of individuals that places get different meanings. In other words, the power of initiative and of everyday practices transforms places. Peter Jackson writes: 'the meanings that people attach to particular places are culturally mediated through experience

and use, and vary according to differences of ethnicity and class, gender and generation' (Jackson, 1998, p. 188). In this research, place is seen as in process, as open, as 'woven together out of ongoing stories' (Massey, 2005, p. 130).

1.4 Indeterminate spaces and Berlin

In this thesis, the multiple meanings of temporary used indeterminate spaces will be investigated. Indeterminate spaces lack officially assigned uses. They are left out of time and place with regard to their urban surroundings. The status of these sites is yet unclear, and can be considered as urban 'no-man's-land' (Groth & Corijn, 2005). Groth and Corijn consider these sites as enablers of non-planned, spontaneous 'urbanity'. Hence, these indeterminate spaces offer opportunities for temporary use. This reclamation of urbanity will be studied in Berlin. The capital of Germany provides a scientifically interesting case. It is characterized by many indeterminate spaces due to its history and its economic situation. Currently, Berlin is a shrinking city with a stagnated population growth and a economic decline. On the other hand, the city has a vibrant culture of temporary use, and is therefore chosen as case.

1.5 Research question

This research tries to map the multiple meanings of a temporary used wasteland, and thereby aims to illustrate the public value of these kind of sites. The following problem statement directs the analysis:

'What does the 'Cuvrybrache', a temporary used indeterminate space in Berlin, mean to its users conveyed by their activities, perceptions and stories, and how does this contemporary social-cultural value conflicts with the conceived space of the neo-liberal urban planning project Media Spree?'

This master thesis sheds lights on the contrast between current temporary use and future urban plans. It is an attempt to deeply dig into the meanings of a place. Thereby a snapshot of different activities, perceptions and stories is made. This colourful snapshot, the contemporary social-cultural value of the site, might conflict with the building plans. To provide a better understanding of the research question its components are discussed below.

First of all, *users* are at the fore front of the analysis. A user is defined as someone who visits the site for any possible purpose during the day or in the evening. Secondly, the *meanings*

that these users attach are diverse and specific for each user. Therefore a focus on the multiplicity of meaning is adapted in this research. In the complex process of constructing meaning, three concepts are considered as most important: *activities*, *perceptions* and *stories*. These concepts are based upon Lefebvre's theory on the production of space (Lefebvre, 1991).

Users transform an indeterminate space into a meaningful place through their activities, therefore it will be studied in this research (Groth & Corijn, 2005; Cupers & Miessen, 2002; Overmeyer, 2007; Franck & Stevens, 2007). In addition, the perception of the place is investigated. Perceptions encompass a wide spectrum, from smell to touch, which makes it difficult to research. I have chosen to focus on the perception of the environment, thus the visual interpretation of the area. The different textures, paths, overgrown walls, deserted halls, broken glasses, and moulded wood of indeterminate spaces offer a different sensual experience as the ordinary city environment. This decay, disorder and openness of these areas are studied in this research (Groth & Corijn, 2005; Haydn and Temel, 2003; Cupers & Miessen, 2002; Franck & Stevens, 2007). Moreover, sounds are considered as important to study. The third subject of study are *stories*. These represent the collected experiences at a place. Users relate memories

to the place, and thereby influence the meaning of it (Low, 2000; Manzo, 2005; Massey, 2005). Finally, it must be noted that the above three concepts interact continuously with each other.

With *temporary use*, I mean the originally unintended use of a site during an uncertain period of time. In other words, this research investigates ephemeral activities, which should be informal (Haydn & Temel, 2003; Cupers & Miessen, 2002). The second piece of the problem statement considers the *conceived space* of the Cuvrybrache. In order to give an insight into the conceived space, visions and motives of urban planners and real-estate developers are studied. The Cuvrybrache belongs to the urban plan *Media Spree*, a waterfront re-development project coordinated by the Berlin government and land-owners. Media Spree aims to realise a creative cluster along the banks of the Spree.

1.6 Selection of the Case

After an exploration of several indeterminate spaces in Berlin, the 'Cuvrybrache' has been selected as case study area. 'Brache' means wasteland in German. The empty plot borders the river Spree and can be found next to the Cuvrystraße and the Schlesische Straße. The plot located in the neighbourhood Wrangelkiez is owned by the real-estate developer IVG. Their

design for the area encompasses offices, lofts and a hotel. The *Neue Spreespeicher* project fits into the concept of Media Spree, which aims to realise a cluster of media companies at the banks of the river Spree. Yet, until now companies have not shown interest in the offered offices, therefore it is unclear whether and when the construction works will start. The Wrangelkiez has a high concentration of small creative companies and has become popular among tourists since last years. Tourist visit the area for the bars, galleries, small shops and clubs.

The Cuvrybrache offers opportunities for a wide variety of activities, due to its current status-quo. The site has been empty for more than ten years. Two mural paintings (by graffiti artist Blu) cone the area, and both locals and tourists visit the site. The Cuvrybrache has been selected as case study, because of its diverse use and central location.

1.7 Scientific Relevance

As mentioned before, this research will be part of the debate on the fragmentation of the urban field (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001; Graham, 2000; Castells, 1996; Zukin, 1995), neoliberalism and urban governance (Harvey, 1989, 2005; Swyngedouw et al., 2002; Strom, 1996) and the demise of public space (Senett, 1992; Goheen, 1998; Low, 2000; Low &

Smith, 2006; Sorkin, 1992). The results will contribute to the discussion by providing an in-depth analysis of a wasteland, which is turned into an alternative public space. It thereby questions the negative tensions in the debate and sheds light on the opportunities offered by indeterminate spaces. The bottom-up aspect is important to illustrate the potential of people's initiative to shape their own living environment.

Concerning the debate on temporary use, 'Zwischennutzung', this research finds its niche by focusing on the meanings of place. Most literature on temporary use concerns form and function. The academic literature presents theories, but lacks the perspective of the users. Cupers and Miessen, for example, reflect on the urban voids and conclude that: 'Void spaces do indeed carry meaning.' (Cupers & Miessen, 2002, p. 95). However, as architects, they did not study in depth the kind of use and the meanings which are constructed by that. Their theory about the urban quality of spaces of uncertainty is based upon their own observations and study of literature. They did not have in-depth interactions with the users of these indeterminate spaces, although they have acknowledged the importance of ephemeral activities and the fluid meanings that are constructed with it. This master thesis attempts to establish such an in-depth interaction with the temporary users of indeterminate spaces.

Another important book about temporary use in Berlin is 'Urban Pioneers', which is edited by Overmeyer. It also lacks an in-depth analysis of the meaning of these temporary projects for the users. 'Urban Pioneers' provides the reader with an excellent and extensive overview of different temporary use projects in Berlin, enriched with several theories on the potential of these projects for the city (Overmeyer, 2007). However, both books present a macro overview of 'spaces of uncertainty' and 'temporary use', respectively, in Berlin, whereas this research attempts to add a micro analysis. This master thesis applies an ethnographic approach, which reveals the multiple meanings constructed by its temporary users.

Academics that participate in the debate on the creative city conceive temporary use projects as creative labs that fuel economic development. I do not neglect the economic potential of these 'creative labs' and the renewed use of old factories, but I suggest that it is vital for understanding temporary use and thereby the dynamics of a city to have insights in the meanings of a place. Moreover, these spaces are crucial for public life, for the liveability of a city. This research therefore questions the need for a neo-liberal planning project like Media Spree, because it threatens the informal public spaces

along the Spree. It is expected that the realisation of a topdown media cluster will in the end damage the attractiveness of the creative city Berlin.

Equally important is the theoretical approach, the place *Cuvrybrache* is studied as a *collection-of-stories-so-far*. This narrative approach is chosen after a critical investigation of theories on space and place. The personal experience of the city is investigated, which contrasts with the city conceived by planners, governors and theorists (Massey, 2005; Lefebvre, 1991; Low, 2000). Specifically, the lived and perceived spaces are studied, which interact with the conceived space of the Media Spree project (Lefebvre, 1991).

It can be argued that the methodological approach of this research is distinctive within the field of urban geography. Population counts resulted in quantitative data, interviews and participant observation add qualitative data to the research. These data are then enriched with photo-essays, which results in a combination of research methods which cannot be found that often in urban research.

1.8 Societal relevance

The scientific argumentation already pointed towards the societal relevance of this master thesis. Its relevance lies in the illustration of the new opportunities that indeterminate spaces offer for a liveable city. City governments might perhaps conclude from this piece of work that they should give citizens more freedom to reclaim urbanity. Planners will maybe read that unplanned, spontaneous, bottom-up initiatives are an important element of public life.

This research might influence urban planners way of thinking about indeterminate spaces in the city. After reading this piece of work, their white-zones on the city map might be perceived in a new way. On the contrary of the plain white 'empty' plots, they might acknowledge that these places, with their multiple meanings, are as colourful as one of the paintings of Berlin street life by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (1880 - 1938).

The selected case is situated within the Media Spree development area. Currently, a fierce public debate about these developments takes place in Berlin. The urban plans are opposed by students, academics and the cultural scene in Berlin, since the plans mean the end of a thriving club and cultural scene at the banks of the River Spree. In June 2009, a big demonstration was organized, which attracted thousands of demonstrators. Again 6th of June 2010 a demonstration took place, this time the Cuvrybrache was squatted for a day (Taz, 2010). This research can be seen as an academic plea for the value

of these sites. It will give the users of indeterminate space a voice within the public debate. Their meanings are collected and analyzed to provide a new reflection on the city.

The public debate about the Media Spree developments fits into the more general concerns of Berlin inhabitants. They have noticed that their city is rapidly changing. It becomes a 'normal' city. Since the investigations of Cupers and Miessen during the 1990s a lot has changed in Berlin. Quite a few indeterminate spaces in Berlin have become locations for offices or housing. The current indeterminate spaces might be seen as the last resorts of what Berlin was in the early nineties: a rough city, with an ever changing, dynamic, creative, abandoned feel to it. An in-depth investigation of one of these indeterminate spaces might shed light on the importance of these sites for Berlin's unique identity.

1.9 Materials and Methods

To grasp the meanings of place, different research methodologies are applied: observation, interviews, and photography. The ethnographic methodologies are inspired from the book 'On the plaza' by Setha Low (Low, 2000). At first, observations are made to describe the rhythms of everyday life. Practices, routines, and paths are documented in population counts, behavioural maps and movement maps. These quan-

titative data are enriched with field notes from participation observation. The data enable a reflection on the use of the space. Secondly, in-depth interviews are conducted with the users of the site. These interviews are semi structured and focus on the user's experiences and memories of the spaces. Place is seen here as the throwntogetherness of here and now, as a collection of stories so-far, therefore the narrative approach is chosen. This narrative approach attempts to analyze stories of the users. Thirdly, I map the activities and the visual experience of these temporary used indeterminate spaces with pictures. Photography aims not to be supplementary to the text, but an illustrative and analytical tool on its own.

This master thesis is structured as follows: First, the academic debate about the threatened diversity and liveability of our cities is analysed, in order to show the need for this research. Then, the subject of this research – *indeterminate space* – is theoretically discussed, it furthermore highlights the temporary use projects in Berlin. For a thorough investigation of the meaning of place, several theories about the space and place are discussed. In chapter five the research design and methods are outlined. Chapter six, seven and eight form the analysis of the research results. First, the conceived space is analysed, to be followed by an investigation of the spatial practices at the Cuvrybrache. Chapter eight reveals the mul-

tiple meanings of place, it is the major part of this research. Finally, conclusions are formulated and recommendations for future research made.

2. Threatened diversity and liveability

The fragmentation of cities and neoliberal politics



Figure 2: Leaflet NAI exhibition

Source: NAI, 2008

'Squares, city beaches, fields, parks, quays – in theory they are open to everybody, but their public character is under pressure.' (NAI, 2008) This statement is the introduction of a travelling exhibition of the NAI (Dutch Architectural Institute) in 2008. The NAI asked eight respondents to carry out a research in their city focusing on the question: 'How public is our public space these days?' and presented the results in kiosks. The investigation of eight European cities (Dublin, Copenhagen, Naples, Barcelona, Rotterdam, Tirana, Brussels and Berlin) gives an insight into the state of their public spaces. For instance, a remark on the privatized public space Potsdamer Platz: the area has a somewhat artificial character, underlined by what is by Berlin's standards an unusual level of tidiness, cleanliness and ubiquitous private security.' (MyPublicSpace, 2008) The exhibition, on the other hand, also sheds light on the diversity of temporary use projects like the beach bar (see Figure 2) that contribute to the liveability of the city.

This chapter attempts to sketch the current urban developments, critically reflect on it and show the relations with Berlin. The NAI exhibition reflects and takes part in the current debate on the value and accessibility of public spaces in our cities. It directly relates to the fragmentation of the urban context. Due to an increase of mobility, economic forces and neoliberal politics cities transform into a mosaic of monocultural detached spaces. Academics, designers and citizens are concerned that their cities become less liveable and diverse. Boomkens states that the diagnosis often simply was that *'the public sphere was in crisis, decaying or even gone'* (Boomkens, 2008, p. 11). I underline that the public sphere is under pressure, but at the end of this chapter I plea for a new perspective upon urban public life. A perspective that sees the opportunities, one that focuses on activities, on the readjustments of spaces, whether they are public or private.

2.1 Fragmentation of the city

Cities have become a archipelago of enclaves: from redeveloped inner cities, housing blocks, office parks, recreational parks, to shopping malls and golf parks. It is an urban field consisting of loosely connected fragments. In this fragmented city each enclave is used by a single group (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001). An illuminating example might be the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin. This square is mainly visited by tourists from all over the world. They take pictures of the *impressive* architecture and buy an ice cream. Ordinary Berliners can hardly be observed at the square. These mono-cultural spaces have al-

most no direct relation to the surrounding area (Metz, 2002).

The rising network society as analyzed by Castells provides an explanation for the developed archipelago of enclaves. During the last decades, technological and economic developments enabled an increase of mobility which fostered the network society (Castells, 1996). Highways and motorization gave people the opportunity to travel fast and spread their activities over a greater area (Graham, 2000). They use their cars to visit shopping malls, golf parks, huge cinemas, outlet stores, ski ramps, and fun centres at the edges of the city (Metz, 2002). As a consequence, the boundary between city and countryside blurred. Therefore one cannot speak any longer of the city, but from an expanding urban field. So called Tussenland ('in-between-land') emerges, a vague mix of industries, housing, farmland, and retail located at the edges of the city (Ruimtelijk Planbureau 2004). Each individual picks the fruits he or she likes out of the fruit bowl that the expanding urban field is. Hence, modern transport modes enabled people to create a personal collection of places that spreads throughout the urban field.

These new mobile consumers seek for homogenised places that are full of riskless risks. In other words, their selected places offer adventures, exciting experiences *and* are secure, trustworthy and comfortable (Hannigan, 1998). Disneyland set the standard for these kind of places, it offers the visitor 'a version of life pared of its sting' (Sorkin, 1992, p. 231). Take the case of a couple visiting the Hard Rock Café. In bewilderment they safely enjoy their drinks and gaze at Jimmy Hendrix's guitar attached to one of the walls. The Hard Rock Café, as a commercially produced fantasy world of rock stars, provides them an exciting rock experience. So, modern citizens construct their personal city, their collection of places, on the basis of their fears and fantasies. They try to avoid contact with the unknown, the dangerous, 'the other' and search for attractive unique places (Hajer & Reijndorp, 2001).

2.2 Neoliberalism

Without a doubt, there is an interplay between the demand for safe *and* unique experiences and the supply of it. Cities and corporations applied new strategies to attract the mobile consumer during the last thirty years. Marketing campaigns like 'I Amsterdam' were used or inner city areas were redeveloped. This was all done in an attempt to attract the shopping flâneur (Spierings, 2006). The city government's role changed from a manager into an entrepreneur (Harvey, 1989). Neoliberalism became the dominant paradigm and it implied a shift of interests. Urban policies were not longer based on sustaining a liveable city for its inhabitants, but on creating

attractive consumer spaces (Turner, 2002). Being competitive was and is believed to be the way to ensure economic growth. Urban planners tended to listen to the market, and public-private partnerships became the key-term within planning.

Yet, with the created themed spaces, the marketing campaigns, and redevelopments of inner-city areas a crux was introduced: similar instruments create similar experiences. Not just our couple has their *special* Hard Rock Café experience, all over the world people enjoy their local Hard Rock Café. Suddenly the unique experience is gone, homogeneous spaces pop up everywhere (Groth & Corijn, 2005). Zukin states it clearly: 'Competition among corporations and cities has led to a multiplicity of standardised attractions that reduce the uniqueness of urban identities even while claims of uniqueness grow more intense.' (Zukin, 1998, p. 837). Although these new urban policies based on neoliberalism did not have equal impact in modern cities, it can be seen as the major driving force of change.

Besides the standardisation of spaces, neoliberalism fostered the control on public spaces. According to Low and Smith it is one of its central strategies to control public spaces (Low and Smith, 2006). This results in constraints on use, exclusion of marginal groups, CCTV surveillance, and ban of demonstration marches. The Dutch artist Marc Bijl successfully showed the increasing control of private companies on public space. In his video Bijl plays the song *Rockin' in the free world* by Neil Young at the Potsdamer Platz. During his performance a guy in a suit stands next to him and says to him: 'uninvited musicians are not allowed to play here'. Marc Bijl listens to the security guard and walks away (Remarque, 2005). Analysis of downtown developments also suggests that the increasing private control over formerly public spaces allows less room for diversity (Turner, 2002).

Summing up, increased mobility, the demand for riskless risks, and neoliberal politics have led to an archipelago of enclaves, a mosaic of mono-cultural detached spaces which seem to threaten the diversity and liveability of our cities. It leads to questions like: Can heterogeneous spaces still be found in our cities? Where can subcultures flourish? Do our public spaces still offer opportunities to meet the 'other'? Who has the right to the city? Asking these questions is pivotal for the future of our cities, there is, however, no reason to believe that 'public space became empty space' (Sennet, 1994, p. 375). We rather need a new understanding of 'the public' in our cities. Cupers and Miessen state firm and clear:

'Instead of introducing new immovable definitions, a more

open concept of public space could be promoted. To understand the layered and paradoxical way that contemporary urban places are used nowadays, one needs to transcend the narrow and normative definitions of both public and space that derive from insistence on homogeneity. Desires for fixed categories of time and space, and rigidly conceived notions of private and public, should be left behind. In order to find a way out of the rhetoric of loss once can only give up these fixed definitions by starting with the field of practice, actions, and behaviour: the production, constant readjustment, and restructuring of space in the contemporary city.' (Cupers & Miessen, 2002, p. 49).

Thus, we need to focus on the opportunities that the archipelago of enclaves offer. What kind of new forms of the public can be seen in our cities? We need a renewed attention for citizens' initiatives for the ongoing re-adjustments of spaces. It is necessary to get rid of a rigid understanding of private and public space and attempt to understand the public aspects of for instance a shopping mall. Yes, public space is under pressure as NAI showed with their exhibition, but the public is not dead. People still have the ability to create meaningful places and they use this ability. The study of actual behaviour will contribute to the academic debate on public space. This master thesis sheds light on the citizens that reclaim urbanity within the volatile context of privatisation, Disneyfication and increased control over public spaces. The next chapter discusses the opportunities that in-between spaces offer for us citizens to ensure the diversity and liveability of our cities.

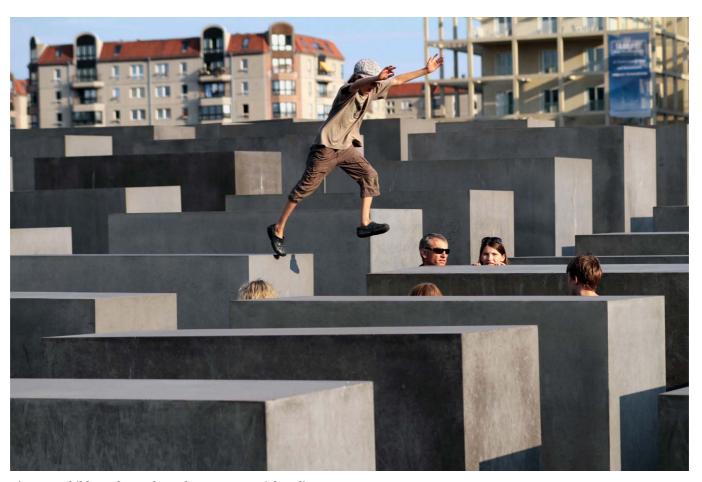


Figure 3: Children play at the Holocaust Memorial Berlin *Source: Borchardt, 2010*

3. Reclaim the city

Indeterminate Spaces and their temporary use

A child jumps from stela to stela at the Berlin holocaust memorial. He discovers the possibilities of the slightly shifted stelae. His parents receive a yell of delight. The memorial which was originally intended to be a place for remembrance and contemplation about the holocaust is turned into a playground by the child. More surprising activities can be observed at the site: 'Visitors pose for photographs with only their heads projecting from the concrete mass, simulating 'drowning'. They test the acoustics by yelling; they play hide-and-seek; they wander and try to get lost. They run along the undulating pathways.' (Stevens, 2008, p. 76). These people test the limits of the public space. It is an example of renewed attention for the continuous re-adjustment of spaces which has been plead for in chapter 1. People do not passively receive designed function and form. On the contrary, they 'keep discovering and inventing new playful possibilities for places' (Stevens, 2008, p.77). This chapter focuses on these new interpretations of spaces, on the spaces that offer opportunities to reclaim urbanity.

Chapter 1 concerned the threatened diversity and liveability of our cities, and suggested to study the spaces in-between.

At first, these sites seem to be indefinable, but after an investigation a pile of definitions is found. Every researcher comes up with its own concept (Figure 4). These concepts are briefly discussed and lead to a list of characteristics of the *indeterminate spaces*. In addition, the transformation of wastelands into meaningful places by *temporary use* is outlined. Finally, the connection is made between temporary use of indeterminate spaces and Berlin. It is a brief analysis of the city's historic, spatial- and economic developments.

3.1 Characteristics of Indeterminate spaces

3.1.1 Loose Space - other interpretations of space

The child playing at the holocaust memorial illustrates the role of interpretation by the use of spaces (Figure 3). Due to his understanding of the space as a playground the memorial site becomes a *loose space*. This concept encompasses the rich variety of activities not originally intended for these spaces pursued by people (Franck & Stevens, 2007). *Loose space* is about the initiative of people, it discusses the idea of mono-cultural spaces. Activities question the original intended functions designed by governments and companies. For

Terrain vague

URBAN FIELD

LOOSE SPACE

LEFTOVER SPACE

WASTELAND

NON-PLACE

DEAD-ZONE

ABANDONED SPACE

INDETERMINATE SPACE

FREE SPACE

EDGE SPACE

SUPERFLUOUS LANDSCAPE

NO MAN'S LAND

URBAN VOID

BROWNFIELD

NON-SITE

TUSSENLAND (LAND-IN-BETWEEN)

Figure 4 Collection of **wasteland** concepts *Source: van Duppen, 2010*

the emergence of loose space people need to recognize the potential of a site. In other words, people use their varying degrees of creativity and determination to make use of what is present. Possibly, they modify existing elements or bring in additional ones if needed. At *loose spaces* a wide variety of activities can be observed like skateboarding, eating, chatting, playing, dancing, performing and demonstrating. These activities are all a matter of leisure, entertainment, social interaction, self-expression or political expression (Franck & Stevens, 2007).

Yet, it all starts with the belief in the general freedom of public space. If people have this understanding, they will perform activities, which depend either on functional objectives or interpretation of the space (Franck & Stevens, 2007). Children, for example, may seek for a site to play football (functional objective) and find an open field suitable for this activity. Or children returning from school pass by an industrial ruin. They are triggered by the many opportunities to hide behind broken walls and start to play hide-and-seek. As I have shown, temporary use of indeterminate spaces start with the interpretation of space. New perspectives on urban spaces offer opportunities for diverse activities.

3.1.2 Lack of programming – locations

Loose spaces can emerge everywhere in the city from the shopping mall to the park. Indeterminate spaces, however, have specific characteristics. These spaces are often overlooked by professionals and academics. If you take a careful look at your city and try to track down the wastelands a new world will open up to you. Leftover spaces have specific characteristics. First of all, they lack programming (Cupers & Miessen, 2002). In other words, the urban planning department has not (yet) assigned a function to the area. Indeterminate spaces are undefined and left out of 'time and place' with regard to their urban surroundings. The status of these sites is unclear and can be considered as urban 'no-man's-land' (Groth & Corijn, 2005). Either the landowner is unknown or he/ she does not actively make use of the site. Examples of these sites are: empty lots, abandoned industrial complexes, piers, waterfronts, former waste sites, spaces under bridges, and abandoned railroad tracks and zones.

Indeterminate space have specific histories and stand in relation to other urban areas. In respect to the city and the emergence of indeterminate spaces, Nielsen states 'it seems that when one part of the city has a strong profile as front, then inevitably a back will appear' (Nielsen, 2002, p. 54) Nielsen, and with him more urban researches, argues that is hard to



Figure 5: Picture of shopping mall? And Indeterminate space. ?? Source: van Duppen, 2009

decide where the city ends and the country side begins (cf. the study *Tussenland* by Ruimtelijk Planbureau which was mentioned in Chapter 1). The mono-cultural enclaves become increasingly prominent and visible. The inner city shopping areas, gated communities, business parks come to the front together with its infrastructure of roads and parking lots. Between the visible enclaves of the front the back emerges: 'Areas that are not usable, not yet used, or already used and abandoned' (Nielsen, 2002, p. 54). Nielsen calls them 'superfluous landscapes', thereby articulating that they are not stable entities,

but part of an ongoing transformation process. Nielsen studies work of Georges Bataille to explain the emergence of superfluous landscapes. Bataille has the idea that 'the material side of things always will contradict and counteract human aspirations of the ideal.' (Nielsen, 2002). This dialectical thinking of Nielsen helps to understand the city. The planned, secured, commercial shopping mall stands in direct phenomenal relation to the urban wasteland. Bataille attempts to show that along with the realisation of the front city, the back emerges (Figure 5). Action triggers reaction, wasteland and shopping mall exist in each other's opposition.

For Nielsen, the superfluous landscape does not in any way express or represent an ideal of how the city should look. So, the superfluous landscape can be seen as a thorn in the side of the urban planner. It is excluded from the 'representational space' of the triadic of Lefebvre. An appealing example of this is given by Doron: '(...) I asked a planner in the planning department to show me the Dead Zone. He pointed to a white mark on the city map that covered Ha'Yarkon Estuary, on the boundary of downtown Tel Aviv.' (Doron, 2007). The 'white' empty area in the view of the planners was actually an informal Palestinian fishing village. Their self build houses and fishing activities were either not seen or ignored by the planner.

Besides Nielsen's philosophy of the front and back of the city, the concept of the *shrinking city* provides a more socio-economic based explanation for the emergence of indeterminate spaces. Shrinking cities have a declining population and have to cope with diminishing economic activities (Oswalt, 2005). At first, it appears surprising that during an era of increasing urbanisation cities experience shrinking processes, but it is major urban development. Its causes differ but have often to do with deindustrialisation processes and failed attempts to catch up with the growing service sector.

The shrinking city is a worldwide phenomenon. The following cities experienced shrinking processes: Detroit, Manchester, Berlin, Paris, Lille, Dresden, Leipzig, Magdeburg, just to name a few (Rieniets, 2005). These cities depended strongly on heavy industries and had to handle with new circumstances. Factories need to close and citizen move out, seeking for a better life in other places. Although the term shrinking has a negative connotation, the porcess nevertheless offers opportunities for specific groups in society. A shrinking city has a surplus of empty unused spaces, which are open for a wide variety of activities (Oswalt, 2005). Just consider for example the influential music that arose from the *wasteland cities* Detroit and Manchester (Diederechsen, 2005). Thus, the



Figure 6: Picture of RAW Source: van Duppen, 2010

emergence of indeterminate spaces can be explained by the shrinking city, and the empty spaces offer opportunities for new developments.

3.1.3 Activities – diverse and temporary

At the wastelands, opportunities arise for a wide variety of activities: playing, partying, sporting, meeting friends, graffiti spraying etc. In other words, indeterminate spaces may allow for non-planned, spontaneous urbanity (Groth & Corijn, 2005). These temporary uses can have a formal or an informal character. Several authors have described the opportunities offered by the leftover spaces in our cities (Cupers & Miessen, 2002; Groth & Corijn, 2005; Nielsen, 2002; Oswalt, 2005; Overmeyer, 2007; Haydn & Temel, 2003). An example is the obsolete railway land RAW in Berlin that now consists of a club, an open air cinema, a climb wand, several ateliers, an indoor skate park and functions as open air 'gallery' for graffiti (Groth & Corijn, 2005 and Overmeyer, 2007) (Figure 6). This case is an example of official temporary use, with an association that loosely manages the area and communicates with the local authorities and the landowner. Besides the formal temporary use informal use appears. For example, kids that discover a wildly overgrown empty plot, or a spontaneous BBQ organised by some friends at a deserted harbour front. These kind of sites are seen by Groth and Corijn as places for

clashes of meaning. To be precise, the temporary use questions the future function of the site. It could even be agendasetting, if urban planners would see these opportunities as well.

Before the temporary use takes place, someone needs to see the potential of sites. Someone realises the opportunities offered and takes the initiative to use the indeterminate space. About the selection of the sites, Temel writes: "Die Auswahl der Orte geschieht teils zufällig, teils absichtsvoll, hat aber spezifische Auswirkungen auf diese Orte' (Temel, 2003, p. 64.). Thus, sites are either randomly chosen or on purpose this has specific consequences for the site. In some cities, location scouts give advices to entrepreneurs for locations of their parties, photo shoots or cultural events (Overmeyer, 2007). In that case, an entrepreneur searches for a 'cool' spot for his event, whereas it can be also the case that an *informal actor* seeks for a site to spray a big graffiti piece.

The leftover buildings at an indeterminate space offer an extensive area of vertical surfaces for the inscriptions of graffiti artists. For graffiti artists, it is important that these spaces lack surveillance, which enable them to spray and develop their alternative aesthetics and skills (Edensor, 2007). Obviously, graffiti spraying is regarded as "out of place" in the

more regulated spaces of the city and therefore indeterminate spaces are important for this subculture (Cresswell, 1996). This research focuses on the informal actor, on the people that reclaim urbanity by their own initiative rather than the formal 'commercial' temporary use.

Due to the fact that indeterminate spaces contain a certain degree of 'semantic emptiness which reigns supreme' (architect Stefan Boeri quoted in Borret, 1999, p. 241), alternative uses are stimulated. In this respect, Groth and Corijn emphasize the importance of *Möglichkeitssinn*, 'sense of possibility' (from Häussermann and Siebel, 1987). 'By leaving certain things undefined and open for the future, space is provided for the co-existence of multiple activities and encounters'. (Groth & Corijn, 2005, p. 522). Whether the physical features of a site support activities, depends on what people want to do. For a demonstration, for instance, a central located open field is needed, but for drug use an enclosed space is more suitable. To summarize, indeterminate spaces with their special status offer possibilities for a wide variety of activities. It starts with selection of the site, to be followed with the performed activities which might influence the agenda setting. Through these temporary activities new meanings are attached to the places.

3.1.4 Alternative aesthetics – openness and disorder

'In the ruin we confront an alternative aesthetics which rebukes the seamlessness of much urban design and opens up possibilities for appreciating beauty and form otherwise.' (Edensor, 2007, p. 245)

The physical appearance of indeterminate spaces contrasts with the themed and controlled spaces of the city, their alternative aesthetics may inspire people or frighten them. The Potsdamer Platz in this respect represents order, whereas an industrial ruin, for instance, symbolizes disorder. Disarray and physical deterioration demands from people to be creative and put forward their own arrangements (Franck & Stevens, 2007). As has been noted, indeterminate spaces have a certain semantic emptiness which reigns supreme and stimulates alternative uses. This openness and disorder contribute to the meaning of place.

Signs of decay and unclear functionality may frighten people. They may ask themselves: 'What is this place meant to be?', and they may even avoid the area. Others read the landscape differently and see opportunities for temporary use. Nielsen argues that 'superfluous landscapes almost call for such consumption, just as they deny any idea of the disappearance of the urban heterogeneity.' (Nielsen, 2002, p. 62). Without a

doubt indeterminate spaces' physical appearance have different effects on people passing by, either they ignore it, gaze at it or use it. One could plea for more disorder in cities to offer the citizens more unexpected experiences, to give them a wake-up call in the middle of the commercially themed inner city areas, as uncertain areas 'provide opportunities to dream outside the commercial box.' (Spierings, 2009, p. 2).

The leftover spaces, in other words ruins, offer new experiences for the senses. Their alternative aesthetic of disorder and decay make them attractive for some people. In fact, a Western tradition of visiting ruins exists, which goes back to Goethe's travels to Italy. He visited the overgrown ruins of the Roman empire and wrote sitting between the wild dogs. The Germans created a specific word to describe this new passion: 'Ruinenlust'. Philosopher de Botton explains: 'It seems, in fact, that the more advanced a society is, the greater will be its interest in ruined things, for it will see in them a redemptively sobering reminder of the fragility of its own achievements.' (de Botton, 2009, p. 314).

Nowadays, we speak of *urban explores*, these people search for abandoned buildings and plots in and around the city. Urban explores form groups to visit industrial ruins. They publish pictures and stories about their experiences on the

Web (Urban Explorers Network, 2010). Ruins provide 'an experiential realm in which sensual and aesthetic regulation is absent and the effects upon the body and its apprehension of space foster a different form of experience that encourages a more playful and sensual engagement.' (Endensor, 2007). The different textures, paths, overgrown walls, deserted halls, broken glasses, moulded wood of a ruin offer a different sensual experience as the ordinary city environment. Children and adults are invited to use the ruin as a playground. Ruins lack regulations and standard affordances of the city, they therefore enable people to carry out actions pure for the kineastic pleasure in performance (Edensor, 2007). They jump over obstacles, run through immense halls, discover corners and climb through windows.

3.1.5 Temporary – from minutes to years

Previous arguments mentioned the possibilities that indeterminate spaces offer for temporary use, yet what does *temporary* mean? First of all, it is important when use takes place as activities vary across day and night. Night time has a certain feel of escapism and deviance to it, which makes it suitable for a techno party. Whereas daytime is preferred by children to play (Franck & Stevens, 2007). It relates to the rhythms of the day and night.

Secondly, temporary encompasses the period of time that activities take place. Both activities occurring for some years or a few minutes are temporary. Temporary means both being ephemeral as a one-day fly, and it might last longer than one thought it could do (Temel, 2003). Temporary conflicts with the durability of the city. Urban planners design plans for years and have the illusion that programmed functions will last for long. In an environment of durability indeterminate spaces offer a podium for temporary activities. These spaces 'express temporality between a past and a future use, the possibility to live in the moment' (Cupers & Miessen, 2002, p. 135).

Temporary uses can be bound by a lease contract, but in most cases temporary use does not have a formal basis at all (Overmeyer, 2007). Thus, as long as uses are not consolidated into an established use based on regular contractual arrangements one speaks of temporary use. Chapter 4 elaborates on the relationship between space and time, and thereby gives more insights into temporality of spaces.

3.1.6 Naming – Waste or opportunity?

This chapter started with the info graphic of different concepts formulated by academics who tried to capture the phenomena of *leftover spaces*. It illustrates that language

has the power to construct images and spaces. 'Wasteland' sounds, for instance, completely different than 'free space'. The cultural turn in science, which had its influence on urban geography, acknowledged the important role of language (Tuan, 1991). Through the use of particular words meanings are attached to phenomena. It becomes even more interesting if we try to conceptualize something that is in-between, that has not been defined yet. If you first have a look at the words, re-read them, compare, and turn them upside down. Who formulated them? Was it an academic, urban planner or a citizen? Doron writes about the concepts of professionals: 'Naming these areas dead zone, void, tabula rasa and no man's land makes them, by definition, intangible.' (Doron, 2007). He shows that naming can be an instrument to colonize and redevelop a site. Consider his example of the dead zone and the Palestinian village (see section 3.1.2). By naming the area 'dead' the urban planners suggest that there is an empty space, an unused area that lacks any signs of life. This gives them the freedom to redevelop it easily. Yet, the conceived space differs from the perceived space. At the dead-zone is actually a Palestinian fishing village located, which fears the upcoming developments. This case must be understood in the political context of an Israeli government that denies the rights of Palestinian citizens. Israel imagined its land as a void, an area waiting for the implementation of the Zionist

dream.

Another example of defining leftover spaces is the term *wasteland* which implies that a site is not useful. Waste belongs to the litterbin, thus wasteland is something to throw away. Lynch opposes: 'that even if land is not generating capital, if it does not require any expenditure, it cannot be considered wasteland since nothing is being wasted' (Doron, 2007). Furthermore do urban planners often talk about derelict space or wasteland if they actually mean ruins (Edensor, 2007). In brief, the power of naming and language must not be underestimated in respect to the construction of spaces. In this respect, attention needs to be given to the formulations of urban planners, which reveals their understanding of spaces in the city.

3.1.7 Public versus private – a new perspective

Is indeterminate space public space? No, but its activities claim it. The first chapter already suggested to look at the readjustments of space, to focus on the performed activities. In other words, a privately owned space can have public elements and vice versa. Public space and private space must not be understood as opposites, 'but as counterpoints in a dynamic process' (Cupers & Miessen, 2002, p. 143). In respect to indeterminate spaces the owner of the site may be unknown, or he/she has the opinion that it is economically more beneficial to leave the site unused. Undeniably, it is also possible that an indeterminate

space is public property. In that case, urban planners have not decided yet what to develop there or have no financial capacity to do so.

Indeterminate spaces can be characterized as alternative public spaces. They are public because they are accessible to all people, and alternative because they are a platform for activities that differ from the ones performed in the primary public spaces. For example, two hills of surplus soil in Aarhus, Denmark, a place where a wide range of activities occur: walking, mountain biking, running, horseback riding, sledging, bonfires, and New Year's Eve celebrations (Nielsen, 2002). However, Nielsen might be too optimistic about the publicness of indeterminate spaces, because these are often not easy to access. Industrial ruins can be dangerous for children, and handicapped people may not be able to enter wildly overgrown sites. To wrap the discussion up, the new perspective on public versus private space must be that indeterminate spaces are possibly public spaces.

3.2 Valuable for the city – unstable meanings

The diversity and liveability of our cities is threatened, our public spaces remain under pressure; these are the doom scenarios presented to us by researchers. Although this may be true, there is reason for hope. Indeterminate spaces offer





Figure 7: The Highline New York – Derelict and Park Source: The Highline, 2010

opportunities for a wide variety of activities. New interpretations, a lack of programming, a physical appearance of disorder and openness, all these aspects enable diverse temporary use. Through these activities new meanings are attached to industrial ruins. These meanings continuously change due to the temporary aspect of the activities. Hence, the identity of these spaces floats and never reaches a point of stability (Temel, 2003; Cupers & Miessen, 2002). The ephemeral activities often question urban planning practices. They may even be agenda setting.

In other words, the temporary use may influence future use (Groth & Corijn, 2005; Franck & Stevens, 2007). For example, New York's derelict elevated train line became wildly overgrown and was therefore used temporarily by tenants as a garden (Figure 7). In 2009 the highline was turned into a public park, designed by Diller Scofidio + Renfro (Doron, 2007; the Highline, 2010). Indeterminate spaces can be seen as 'free-zones' characterized by permanent elusiveness, guerrilla tactics, fundamental uncontrollability and relative isolation and frontierlessness. In these 'free zones' subcultures can flourish, which are crucial for the future of a city. The so-called *shadow city*, the collection of indeterminate spaces, nourishes the city's social life and its attractiveness (Urban Unlimited, 2004).

To conclude, meaningful places are created by citizens at indeterminate spaces. They reclaim urbanity by temporary use, and thereby they sustain a diverse and liveable city. This master thesis focuses on an indeterminate space in Berlin and sheds light on the diverse meanings created. For a better understanding of the case-study Berlin, its history and spatial developments are outlined in the next section. To be followed by Chapter 4, which provides an analysis of the production of space and the construction of meaning.





















3.3 Indeterminate spaces and temporary use in Berlin

As mentioned before, the reclamation of urbanity by temporary use of indeterminate spaces is studied in Berlin. The capital of Germany provides an interesting research area with a vibrant culture of temporary use. The Urban Catalyst research project documented almost 100 temporary use projects located at abandoned spaces or in vacant buildings in 2004-2005. Berlin has many *indeterminate spaces* due to its history and economic situation. Along the route of the Berlin wall many 'empty' spaces can still be found, the former division of the city is still visible at these voids. The existence of about 500 ha abandoned industrial sites, 356 ha abandoned infrastructure sites, 140 ha waiting for urban redevelopment, 143 ha empty cemeteries, and circa 170 hectares undeveloped building plots makes Berlin *the* city to investigate the meaning of *indeterminate spaces* (Overmeyer, 2007).

Currently, Berlin is a shrinking city with a stagnated population growth and economic decline. After the *Widervereinigung* (reunification of Germany), a bright future for Berlin was predicted. Yet, this positive scenario of economic growth, relocation of the national government from Bonn to Berlin, and a unified Germany turned out to be rather complex at the beginning of the 1990s. According to Häußermann, Berlin was a divided city before the *Widervereinigung* and transformed

into a fragmented city after reunification (Häußermann & Kapphan, 2005). Since 1990, major developments occurred in Berlin: deindustrialization, integration of East and West, and the financial crisis of the 90s. Furthermore, West-Berlin had to develop a new base for their economy without the generous subsidies of West Germany, and East-Berlin had to transform from a communist society towards capitalism. The coalition between SPD and CDU introduced a neoliberal approach to tackle the challenges. Berlin started to play the role of an entrepreneurial city, which is in line with the developments described in chapter 1. Mega projects like the Potsdamer Platz were realised in public-private partnerships which aimed for economic developments (Strom, 1996). These growth coalitions were formed to materialise the new imagination of Berlin as a world city (Cochrane & Jonas, 1999).

Academics have criticized this 'new economic policy' for a lack of democratic accountability. Moreover, this mega project approach, with an urban governance characterised by exclusionary involvement of elites, leads to cutbacks in budgets for social projects and urban redevelopment of deprived neighbourhoods (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). This policy shift includes as well the privatization of public spaces in Berlin (Cochrane & Jonas, 1999).

On top of that, Berlin experiences a financial crisis due to

'worst practice' urban governance during the 1990s. The city government has anticipated too eagerly on major growth predictions, and as a result has to deal with the decreasing returns. These mega projects contained too high risks (Krätke, 2004). In short, Berlin provides with its volatile urban context a scientifically interesting case for a research about the meaning of temporary use. In particular, because Berlin remains a dynamic city through the various temporary projects.

4. Meanings of Place

Space, place and the construction of Meaning

'New York, I love you but you're bringing me down' sings James Murphy (LCD Soundsystem, 2007). The song deals with his ambivalent relation with New York city. Despite of his feelings of depression, he declares his love to New York. James Murphy, as many people, feels attached to his hometown. The place where he lives has certain meanings to him that he expresses in the song. For each of us, the meanings of place differ. This chapter focuses on the meanings of place, in order to enable a grounded analysis. First, a brief phenomenological study of space and place is presented. Second, theories about the construction of meaning are analysed. Finally, a conceptual framework is presented that aims to answer the question: 'How are meanings of place constructed and produced?'.

4.1 What is space? What is place?

The fundamental questions 'What is space?' and 'What is place' are not easily answered, but they are essential to be studied, as they provide the framework for the analysis of the indeterminate spaces. I have chosen writings of Tuan, Cresswell, Harvey, Massey, Healy, Graham and Lefebvre to give a brief overview of the academic discussion on space and

place. It is my purpose to present some conflicting theories. Out of this discussion, I will distillate my own interpretation of the concepts space and place.

'Not so many years ago, the word 'space' had a strictly geometrical meaning: the idea it evoked was simply that of an empty area.' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 1).

It is with this observation that Lefebvre starts his book on the production of space. He published his book in 1974 and refers to the dominant understanding of space in the 1950s and 1960s. At that time, space was mostly seen as an objective, external container in which human life is played out (Graham and Healy, 1999). Space was conceived as something absolute, based on the ideas of Newton and Descartes. It is 'fixed and we record or plan events within its frame' (Harvey, 2007, p. 272).

This dominant understanding of space had an impact on planners and architects (and still has, according to Graham and Healy). Modern architects conceived space as open to calculations. They just started planning from scratch, like le

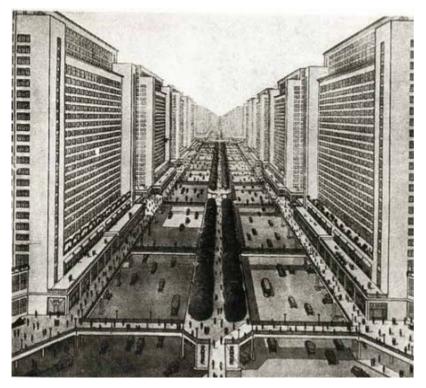


Figure 8: La Ville radieuse (The Radiant City) - Corbusier Source: Corbusier, 1935

Corbusier, one of the leading figures in the modernist movement, did with his plan for Paris. His 'La Ville Radieuse' aimed at the efficiency of the city, suggested to demolish parts of Paris' centre to realize high-rises, roads and parks (Figure 8). Although it has never been realized, the plan provoked a lot of discussion (Montavon, 2006)

In the 1970s Tuan, among other humanist geographers, challenged this positive spatial science understanding of space. Humanists disagreed on the mathematical concept of space and focused rather on subjectivity, experience and meaning (Bijoux, 2006). If they would be confronted with 'La Ville Radieuse' they would ask: 'Where is the human perspective?' Is *this* a liveable city?'. In his book 'Space, place and experience' Tuan puts forward that planners and architects think in models and inventories. They neglect the human experience, the things that are hard to express such as: touch, taste, smell, hearing and even vision (Tuan, 1977). In his work on Rhythmanalysis Lefebvre also articulates the importance of the senses (Lefebvre, 2004).

As noted above humanistic geographers criticised the absolute understanding of space, but how do they define space and place? For Tuan: "Space" is more abstract than "place". What begins as undifferentiated space becomes place as we get to

know it better and endow it with value...the ideas 'space' and 'place' require each other for definition. From the security and stability of place we are aware of the openness, freedom, and threat of space, and vice versa. Furthermore if we think of space as that which allows movement, then place is pause; each pause in movement makes it possible for location to be transformed into place.' (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). Indeed, space seems more abstract than place. It is harder to grasp, both touchable and not. If one walks on the street you may look up to the sky: space, backwards: space, turning your gaze towards your feet: space. We are surrounded by space. Exactly the 'we' in the last sentence articulates that the human body is the only point of reference. As Tuan put it: 'This is to say, if we look for fundamental principles of spatial organization we find them in two kinds of facts: the posture and structure of the human body, and the relations (whether close or distant) between human beings.' (Tuan, 1977, p. 34).

Currently some human geographers base their ideas on those of Tuan. Cresswell is one of them, and inspired by Tuan he writes about the world of meaning: 'Place is how we make the world meaningful, and the way we experience the world.' (Cresswell, 2004, p. 12). He emphasizes that places are always material and mental at the same time (Cresswell, 1996). For example, New York City is for James Murphy not merely

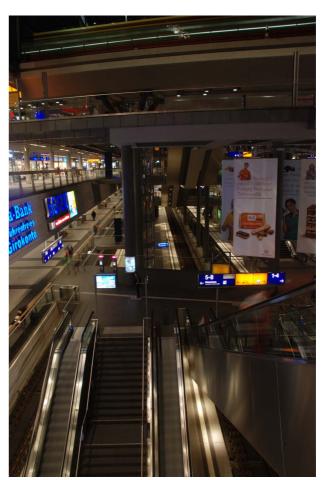


Figure 9: Berlin Hauptbahnhof (Central Station) Source: van Duppen, 2008

mental it is an actual place where he lives. An actual material space where he can walk the streets. How has this space become a place then? 'When humans invest meaning in a portion of space and then become attached to it in some way (naming is such a way) it becomes a place.' (Cresswell, 2004, p. 10). Whereas Cresswell speaks of place, Lefebvre mentions social space. The definition of 'place' by Tuan and Cresswell resembles the definition of 'social space' by Lefebvre. Lefebvre underlines: 'Social space will be revealed in its particularity to the extent that it ceases to be indistinguishable from mental space (as defined by the philosophers and mathematicians) on the one hand, and physical space (as defined by practic-sensory activity and the perception of 'nature') on the other.' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 27).

Tuan's understanding of space (the articulation on the relations between human beings) shows similarities with the concept of relational space as formulated by Harvey. He identified a threefold division of space: absolute, relative and relational (Harvey, 2007, p. 271-277). I will try to explain his understanding of space by using an example. Picture the Hauptbahnhof Berlin, and in the middle of the railway station stands a woman (Figure 9). She wants to visit her mother. The woman looks up and sees the S-Bahn. She realises that she has to go up to reach the S-Bahn. The distance between

her and the S-Bahn is absolute; an absolute space, a container waiting to be filled. She takes the escalator that travels with a certain speed. Here the absolute space becomes relative. It takes some time to go from one object to the other. On her way to the S-Bahn she visits the pharmacist to buy medicines for her ill mother. After another escalator she takes the S-Bahn which is heading towards her mother. Her visit to the pharmacist can only be explained by the concept of relational space. It shows the context-dependence of space-time. She travels because she wants to visit her sick mother. As Harvey writes about relational space: 'An event or a thing at a point in space cannot be understood by appeal to what exists only at that point. It depends upon everything else going around it…' (Harvey, 2007, p. 274).

One could question what is the correct understanding of space then, absolute, relative or relational? Harvey concludes that it is all three and that it depends on the nature of the phenomena under investigation which concept of space is used. As this research investigates the meanings that users attach to temporary used spaces in Berlin a relational understanding of spaces is needed. As noted by Harvey: 'If I ask what Tiananmen Square or 'Ground Zero' mean, then the only way I can seek an answer is to think in relational terms' (Harvey, 2007, p. 275). Meanings have to do with



Figure 10: Graffiti in Berlin - 'How long is now?' Source: van Duppen, 2008

people, with opinions, experiences, stories, history and this all directs to relational space. According to the concept of relational space, processes do not occur *in* space but they define their own spatial frame, like the people dancing in the Berlin RAW-temple at night define the former industrial building as a club and thereby attach new meanings.

4.1.1 Space and Time

Previous concepts have not made clear yet the relation between space and time. It needs some more attention. A huge graffiti near a parking lot provides a starting point for the discussion below. On the wall of the building is questioned: 'How long is now?' (Figure 10) The blurred picture visualizes the impossibility of capturing 'now' and is thereby the answer to the question on the wall. Photo cameras give the false impression that they document 'now', that they are able to freeze a frame. But the shutter is always open for some time, it opens at A and shuts at B. One could shorten the shutter time from 1/10 to 1/1000 of a second, but it remains a period. This articulates the impossibility of capturing a moment. It implies that time is in essence fluid. Time cannot be grasped, if you try to do it, it is already gone. If space and time are seen as interrelated no fixed points exist. We live in fluidity and we will only survive if we move on. What does this fluidity mean for space? Massey has written an in-depth book

on space. In 'For Space' she relates the question of 'now' with 'here'.

Massey, first of all, makes three propositions about space:

- Space is the *product of interrelations*
- Space as the sphere of coexisting heterogeneity
- Space is always under construction (Massey, 2005, p. 8)

In contrast to the straightforward conceptualisation of Tuan of space as something abstract and open Massey's definition is more detailed and directly related to time. She also stresses the importance of interactions between people but she thereby argues for the multiplicity of space. Space is the sphere where distinct trajectories coexist. With trajectories she means the history, change, movement, of things themselves. Space is thus, the sphere of coexisting heterogeneity, different realities, temporalities, stories coexist within one sphere. Space may never be one entity, its character is diffuse and diverse. Furthermore, space is always in the process of being made, it is never finished, because it is within the interaction of people that space is produced. Considering these points made by Massey, the indeterminate spaces of Berlin must be seen as continually changing, dependent on the interactions of people and things. To wrap up, Massey states about space:

'Perhaps we could imagine space as a simultaneity of stories-so-far' (Massey, 2005, p. 9)

To return to 'here' and 'now'. Am I standing here? By posing the question the 'here' is already shifted, gone. There are no fixed points in space; the poles are shifting slightly each moment in time. For Massey 'here' and 'now' are integral to one another like space and time. Tuan distinguishes space and place as movement and pause, as open and stable, as freedom and security. Space and place are counter positioned to each other. In my opinion, Tuan's understanding of space and place is too static, and therefore not truthful to reality. One could easily imagine a place that is insecure and open to changes all the time, such as a slum area where violence and bad infrastructure create an insecure environment. In addition, the urban structure transforms rapidly due to adjustments, extensions or demolitions of the small houses. Therefore I prefer to use the understanding of Massey: 'the event of place'. She underlines the thrown togetherness of place: '...the unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now (itself drawing on history and a geography of thens and theres); and a negotiation which must take place within and between both human and nonhuman...' (Massey, 2005, p. 140). The attractiveness of the concept of Massey lies in the more inclusive demarcation of space and place: 'If space is rather a

simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collections of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space.' (Massey, 2005, p. 130).

Concerning the main focus of this chapter 'meanings of place' the theory of Massey has some implications. Place must be seen as in process, as open, as 'woven together out of ongoing stories', and in line with this understanding should the case be studied. Thereby the relations between humans and nonhumans produce the places. Places must be understood as spatio-temporal events. As the internally multiple places are negotiated all the time by humans and nonhumans, there 'can be no assumption of pre-given coherence, or of community or collective identity' (Massey, 2005, p. 141). Studying the negotiations is therefore necessary to map the meanings of place. In other words, focus on the constant re-adjustment and restructuring of space in the contemporary city as has been stated in Chapter 2 and 3.

4.2 Production of space and place

Although Massey's theory provides important insights, they are fairly abstract for a research implementation. For a better understanding of the *negotiations* which produce space, Lefebvre's book '*The production of space*' is useful. Although published earlier, Lefebvre's work can be seen in line with

Massey's relational understanding of space. He also insists on the ongoing change of space, on the multiple stories, on different actors playing a role within the production of space. According to him space embodies social relationships and is diverse (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 27).

Lefebvre speaks of three ways in which space is produced: perceived, conceived and lived. Perceived space (spatial practices) embodies the daily reality and urban reality. Respectively, the daily routines of people and the interactions with the routes and networks of the urban. Daily activities like waking up, travelling to work, attending a meeting, having lunch produce the perceived space. The conceived space (representations of space) is the conceptualized space of 'scientists, planners, urbanists, technocratic subdividers and social engineers all of whom identify what is lived and what is perceived with what is conceived' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 38). These are the theories about city development from urban professionals, concepts like the creative city, or blue prints for urban development. Lefebvre articulates the importance of the conceived space in producing social space. In line with Foucault and Habermas, he is concerned with the great power of the government and the corporate economy to penetrate and dominate the way we live today (Healy, 2007). Thirdly, Lefebvre defines the lived space as (representational



Figure 11: Berliner Straßenszene (Berlin Street Scene) 1913 – Ernst Ludwig Kirchner

Source: Artnet, 2008

spaces): '...directly lived through its associated images and symbols, and hence the space of 'inhabitants' and 'users', but also of some artists and perhaps of those, such as few writers and philosophers, who describe and aspire to no more than describe.' (Lefebvre, 1991, p. 39). In other words, the cultural expressions of place qualities and spatial meanings (Healy, 2007). An example of the lived space is the painting of a street scene in Berlin 1913 by Ernst Ludwig Kirchner (Figure 11). Kirchner describes in form and colour the liveliness of the street at night in the cosmopolite Berlin. He tries to capture the gaze of the flâneurs towards the cocotte (prostitute). Kirchner succeeded in visualizing the vibration in the air of the gazes meeting each other in a short moment (Lorenz, 2008). It is a cultural expression of street life in Berlin.

In spite of what might be suggested by these clear distinctions of space in perceived, conceived and lived they must be understood as dynamic. All are present in daily life and continually interact with each other. It is only meant as an analytical tool, that will not always be adequate. If Lefebvre's theoretical framework is applied to RAW-Temple an indeterminate spaces (described in Chapter 3) then the new users produce the perceived space. They make new routines, and use the RAW-temple for their nights out. Planners have long seen RAW-temple as a site waiting to be developed, as an

'empty' space open for demolition to make new developments possible. Thus, the conceived space of the RAW-temple is an abandoned industrial ruin, which should be cleared in order to enable a new building project. While the lived space of the RAW-Temple consists of the different images users have. One sees it as a site for celebrating, others might experience it as an excellent site for graffiti art. Moreover, it means for skaters an area to sport at the indoor skate-hall. The RAW-temple illustrates Lefebvre's idea that 'space' is continually produced by 'human processes of routine material engagement. of intellectual conception and of cultural expression' (Healy, 2007, p. 205). As has been noted in Chapter 3, temporary use may influence the future function of the site. The performed activities could be agenda-setting, thus the perceived and lived space influence the conceived space. Planners get inspiration, guidance from ephemeral activities. These are the ongoing negotiations where Massey speaks of, the continuously readjustment, interacting between perceived, conceived and lived space.

4.3 Put into practice

From Massey's understanding of space as a simultaneity-ofstories-so-far, a link was made to Lefebvre's production of space to better understand the ongoing negotiations between humans and nonhumans. Although Lefebvre provides valuable insights into the production of space, there is a need for concrete research instruments. In other words, how to bridge the gap between theory and practice? Low's study of plaza life shows some useful instruments to study the production of space (Low, 2000).

To sketch the context for Low's research methods her theory on production of space must be considered. She writes about the social production of space and the social construction of space. The social production of space 'includes all those factors – social, economic, ideological, and technologicalthat result, or seek to result, in the physical creation of the material setting' (Low, 2000, p. 128). She adds the concept of the social construction of space: 'the actual transformation of space – through peoples' social exchanges, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting – into scenes and actions that convey meaning.' (Low, 2000, p. 128). The 'social production of space' bears some similarities with the conceived space of Lefebvre. Government, companies and planners produce the material setting. However, Lefebvre does not literally speak of producing a material setting. He articulates the influence of theories, models, and design from the people in charge on the perceived and lived spaces. In respect to the 'social construction of space' it is evident that both Lefebvre and Low put emphasis on the actual transformation

of space, on the user's experience, and on the importance of cultural images.

Low interweaves ethnography, history, literature and personal narrative to present a comprehensive view on plaza life in Costa Rica. Plaza Parque Central and Plaza de la Cultura were researched over a 12 year period, which made analysis of changes in use and design possible. Especially, the ethnographic part of her research provides useful instruments for this research. Her observations result in population counts, movement- and behavioural maps. From this collection of data she draws conclusions on performed activities and kind of users. By doing so, Low sketches the *rhythms of everyday life*, which directly relate to Lefebvre *spatial practices*, the experience of urban reality.

Low articulates that similar activities occur at the plazas, but that the activities take on very different forms and meanings, and are performed by very different people. About the differences Low writes: 'this difference is significant in that these users — and their distinct social worlds — socially construct an "out-of-awareness" (non-discursive) boundary-maintaining system.' (Low, 2000, p. 168). It could also be the case with the researched indeterminate spaces that a site can be exclusively used by a particular group of youth. A 65-year-old

women, for example, might experience this 'out-of-awareness' when attending a night out in the RAW-Temple. The data collected by Low showed 'the accretion of multiple paths and projects located in space and time links the individual activities to age, gender, and class differences found in the two plaza's. Over time these differences become naturalized, as has been argued by Pierre Bourdieu (1977), and perceived as social reality. Thus, individual paths and projects are transformed into cultural norms for behaviour re-enacted in daily social practices.'(Low, 2000, p. 178). For indeterminate spaces it will be the interesting to analyse if new routines are made by use. It, however, can be expected that the ephemeral character of the activities prevent development of routines.

Nevertheless, temporary use may have a strong repetitive character and might be able to realise new routines. Manzo, in his article on the multiple dimensions of place meaning, insists on the significance of repeated use, as 'It enables participants to engage in a variety of experiences in places. This added many facets and layers of meaning to those places, as people 'collected' experiences in them. (Manzo, 2005, p. 81). From Manzo's layers of meaning it is only a small step to the meanings of plaza life. In addition to the ethnographies, Low presents full conversations with plaza users, who speak about the meaning of the plaza in their life. This is an 'effort

to provide greater multivocality and breadth and a more unmediated experience of being in the plaza than is possible in ethnography.' (Low, 2000, p. 206). I underline this quote from Low and will focus in my research also on stories of people. Understanding a city implies listening to the stories of its inhabitants, as in their stories the city becomes meaningful. Here, Massey is relevant again in her understanding of space as a *simultaneity of stories-so-far*. To reflect on the diversity and complexity of a city it is necessary to collect the stories of people.

Dormans, in this respect, uses a polivocal approach for his article in an attempt to integrate different voices and thereby create a new, more inclusive image of urban life. He collects different stories about the Dutch cities Tilburg and Almere and categorized them as either abstract, concrete or personal. By drawing a new representation of the city Dormans emancipates the stories of inhabitants against those of academics and professionals (Dormans, 2008). I will attempt to bring to the front the perceived and lived spaces, the construction of space, the stories of inhabitants. Indeterminate spaces are often seen by professionals as waste, this research uses a new perspective upon them. I give temporary users an opportunity, by having conversations, to show the importance of these sites for their urban life.

4.4 Construction of meaning

Let us return to James Murphy's lived space, as described in the introduction. The lyrics 'New York, I love you but you're bringing me down' reflect his relation to the city. The song is a cultural expression of what the place New York means to him. In this chapter, space, place and meaning were analyzed. What can be concluded, and what does this imply for the research of temporary used indeterminate spaces? First of all, space and place must not be seen as opposites, not as something purely absolute or relative. Space is a simultaneity of stories-so-far, it is heterogeneous and open to change (Massey, 2005). Second, place is the 'event of place', a thrown togetherness of here and now, a collection of stories-so-far. Which collection of stories can be found in the temporary used indeterminate spaces? Who are the storytellers? A dialogue between site and experience produces layers of meaning. The ongoing negotiations between perceived, conceived and lived spaces produce space and thereby influence the meanings that people construct of it.

The theoretical discussion on space, place and meaning results in the following theoretical framework that guides the fieldwork and analysis (Table 1and Figure 12). The framework is the basis for answering the question: 'What does the Cuvrybrache mean to its users?'. As noted above, for this

research is place understood as a *collection of stories-so-far* (Massey, 2005) and the ongoing negotiations between humans and nonhumans are revealed by Lefebvre triadic of space. For the collection of data Low's research instruments are implemented.

Table 1 shows the different analytical steps made and attempts to provide the basis for the applied research methods. The next chapter emphasizes the implementation of these instruments, at this point the three concepts: 'activities, perceptions and stories' are discussed. These three concepts continuously interact and influence each other and thereby construct meaning. Each concept is related to the aim of this research, to the meaning of a temporary used indeterminate space. To prevent confusion note this: although the term *indeterminate space* is mentioned in the research question, the multiple meanings of *place* are investigated. Thus, place is at the centre of analysis.

4.4.1 Activities

First, activities transform the indeterminate spaces. The spatial practices of temporary users shape and readjust the undefined area (as has been argued in Chapter 3). It all comes down to the following question aimed at the user: 'What are you doing in this place?'. Users' activities influence the

Lefebvre's labels	His definition	'translation'	Research Concepts	Research methodology
Perceived space	Daily routines and interactions	Routine, material	Activities> What do	Observations of behaviour> population
(spatial practices)	with the routes and networks	engagement and	you do at this place?	counts, movement- and behavioural
	of 'urban reality'	experience of being		maps
		in and moving	Perceptions> How	
		around urban areas	do you perceive this	Interviews> Conversations about acti-
			place?	vities, rhythms, perceptions
				Photography> represented 'physical reality', reveals activities
Conceived space	As in the conceptions of 'sci-	Intellectual con-		Analysis of planning documents and
(representations of	entists, planners, urbanists,	ceptions of urban		urban design
space)	technocratic subdividers	areas, produced		
	and social engineers, as of a	for analytical and		Conversations with urban planners,
	certain type of artist with a	administrative		scientist, activist, and tour-guide
	scientific bent' (Lefebvre, p.	purposes		
	38)			
Lived space	'As directly lived through	Cultural expressi-	Stories> How do you	Interviews> Conversations about
(representational	images and symbols' ex-	ons of place qua-	memorise this place?	former experiences. Analysis of words
spaces)	pressed in symbols and signs	lities and spatial		and stories.
		meanings		
				Books and Video material which
				documents the place: Lonely Planet,
				Graffitibook, Blu video, Berlin
	awork and research methodologies.			photobook

Table 1 Theoretical framework and research methodologies: First three rows of the table are taken from Healy, 2007.

construction of meaning. Different aspects of activity play a role: 'What kind of activity? When does is take place? How often does it take place? Who does it? and Where does it take place?'. Answering these question sheds light on the daily use of the urban reality. Paths and projects shape the meanings attached to place. It is through activities that people experiences a place, which always happens in interaction with the environment and other people. Observations of activities resulted in behavioural maps, movement maps and population counts. To enrich these data questions were asked at users about their activities. Simultaneously, pictures offer visual information about the kind of use. In brief, through activities new meanings are attached to places.

4.4.2 Perception

Second, the daily experience of urban reality influences the meaning that people attach to a place. Question aimed at the user is: 'How do you experience this place?'. It starts with the perception of space, which then becomes an experience. Looking at this piece of paper, for example, is a perception of your environment which becomes a visual experience. Perception is a rather complex concept because it encompasses vision, touch, sound and smell. Due to a lack of time and sufficient recourses not all these aspects can be researched. As shown in Chapter 3 the alternative aesthetics of disorder and

openness are an important element of indeterminate spaces, which encourages alternative uses. Therefore the visual experience of the site is part of this research. In addition to the visual aspect sound is included. Personal observation suggested the importance of sounds at the area. It is expected that the relative quietness attracts visitors. Sound and visual experience influence each other. Ge and Hokao have investigated the urban sound environment in Saga City Japan and concluded that 'visual information can change the image of soundscape a lot...'. They showed that people valued a site with a natural and silent visual image as quiet, cheerful, and natural notwithstanding the traffic noises (Ge and Hoako, 2005). Thus, a calm view provides a more silent sound experience, which is an example of how the human senses interact. Besides interview questions considering sound and visual experience, pictures are taken to document the visual experience.

4.4.3 Stories

The third aspect of users' construction of meaning are their stories. Places are considered as a collection of stories. This research emancipates stories of the temporary users. Their stories reveal pivotal experiences and belong to Lefebvre's lived spaces. Memorisation of places are cultural expressions that handle about spatial meanings. Conversations with users

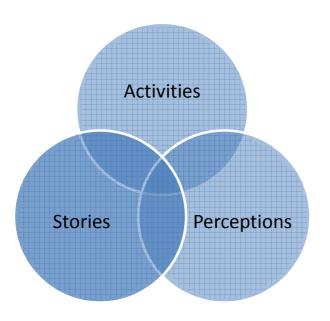


Figure 12: The interrelated concepts – Activities, perceptions and stories $\it Source: van Duppen, 2010$

are analysed on content and style. Section 3.1.6 about naming already illustrated that the use of specific words influence the meaning attached to an area. Thus, in this research is studied: What do people tell and how do they tell it? The power of language is not denied (Tuan, 1991). Finally, the different stories are compared to shed light on similarities and differences, it shows the internal discussion, heterogeneity of a space. This research chooses thus for a narrative approach which enables conclusions on meanings of place.

4.4.4 Interaction of concepts and multiple meanings

The following story illustrates that the previous concepts continuously interact. A group of boys passes by an empty plot. They see the opportunity for playing a game of soccer (perception). They start to play (activity), and it turns into an afternoon full of joy (experience), the boys return home and tell about this fantastic game (story) and the next time the boys use the same area for their soccer game as before (perception). In other words, the concepts activities, perceptions and stories continuously influence each other and have overlap. Figure 12 attempts to illustrate that the concepts are interrelated. Performed activities are the basis for stories told and these stories influence again future use. If an industrial ruin is perceived as a place for graffiti, then this activity may also take place. Without interpretation of the place there is no

use, at the same time however, without activities there are no visual experiences.

Now that the process of meaning construction has been made clear a short overview of specific meanings of place is given. Manzo has explored the multiple dimensions of place meaning and concluded that many participants felt deep love for some places, but also fear, dread or hatred. In his research almost every participant mentioned a place where he felt ambivalent about. Participants related places to their identity, to what they are as a person. Participants appreciated these places, because they offered opportunities for a moment of privacy, introspection and reflection. Manzo about these places: 'More than half (60%) of participants went to places outside of their residence to seek privacy to think and reflect on life. Of these, most (58%) sought out natural settings. These locations enabled participants to become "lost in thought" and to reflect on their problems.' (Manzo, 2005, p. 76). Participants also told about places where they experienced a personal turning point in their life. A place became then a marker in a life journey. Besides issues of identity were places also valued as 'a bridge to the past' (Manzo, 2005, p. 78). People were reminded of former experiences at the same place or at a 'similar' place, these: '...new places provide linkages to past places, events and people by building emotional and

psychological "bridges" which helped create and maintain a sense of continuity and wholeness in people's lives.' (Manzo, 2005, p. 78). In addition, did the research results reveal that people had feelings of safety, threat and belonging to certain places. These diverse meanings touched upon by Manzo will be studied in the conversations with the temporary users of the indeterminate space. It might be the case that people value the site for being safe and offering an opportunity for self reflection. Chapter 8 of this master thesis will reflect on some of the previous mentioned meanings.

To conclude, the focus of this research lies on the activities, stories and perceptions. It has been argued that these concepts are relevant for the topic temporary use. Specifically, these concepts will reveal the unique aspects of temporary use: unconventional activities an extraordinary physical form and memories of risks. This research will investigate these aspects by conducting in-depth interviews, a photo-essay and observations in the field. The following chapter elaborates on the research methods that are applied.

5. Research Design and Methods

The former chapter concluded with a conceptual framework and the directions for the applied research methodologies, in this chapter these methodologies and the research design will be discussed in detail.

5.1 Conceptual models and research design

For this research Lefebvre's triadic of space production was adapted to guide the data collection and analysis. This research focuses on the three concepts activities, perceptions and stories, which was shown in the former chapter. To successfully investigate these three aspects a mixed research methods are applied. In other words, the meanings of place are investigated by a triangulation approach. Data from observations, interviews and photography are combined and in an iterative process analysed. This is done because a combination of quantitative data and qualitative data tend to mutually reinforce each other (Bryman, 2008). In order to achieve multivocality and in-depth analysis interviews play a major role within the research. Smaldone clearly states the need for a qualitative analysis if one investigates the meaning of place: 'The attributes or dimensions that give places their meanings do so through intertwined, interactive processes—none are

isolated or compartmentalized aspects that can be easily simplified through a reductionistic approach to modelling them.' (Smaldone, 2005). Thus, meanings of place are not reduced to strict classifications, but broad formulated concepts lead the data collection and analysis.

The research subject consists of two questions: 'What does the 'Cuvrybrache', a temporary used indeterminate space in Berlin, mean to its users conveyed by their activities, perceptions and stories?, and: 'How does this contemporary social-cultural value conflicts with the conceived space of the neo-liberal urban planning project Media Spree?. The former question is at the forefront of analysis. Answers are found by implementing public space methodologies on the Cuvrybrache (indeterminate space). Through the collection of meanings a socio-cultural value can be constructed. This must be seen, however, as a snapshot of ongoing negotiations, as a brief reflection on the continuously changing space. The latter question highlights the urgency of this research. It attempts to show the interrelation between citizens, corporations and governmental institutions. On the one hand there is the sociocultural value of the site and on the other the urban plans

which aim for office buildings. This master thesis should be interpreted as a case-study, which attempts to illustrate the socio-cultural value of an indeterminate spaces by application of different methodologies. Research results intend to be a contribution to the current debate on the demise of public space. It puts forward a counter argument to academics who tend to overstate the influence of Disneyfication, loss of diversity and increase of control. After all, this research provides a new alternative perspective on the liveability of our cities.

5.2 Research methods

Several research instruments are used to present a comprehensive analysis of the multiple meanings of the Cuvrybrache. A mix of observations, interviews and photography is implemented. This paragraph discusses these different instruments and their relevance for the research. In chapter 4 did Table 1 show the direct relation between Lefebvre's triadic of space, the research concepts and the methods. These research methods reinforce each other. Activities observed were, for example, used as examples by the interviews. Users' stories inspired the photographic documentation of the place. Then again made the act of photography me more aware of the environment and enabled better insights and opportunities for asking questions. Each methodology will now be discussed.

5.2.1 Observations

'Observations put researcher right where the action is, in a place where they can see what is going on.' (Corbin & Strauss, 2008, p. 30). Observations have the objective to document activities, to simply **be** at the spot. They are mainly aimed at mapping the activities performed. Different aspects of the activities play a role: the kind of activities, time of action, and the location. These behavioural observations result in population counts, behavioural maps and movement maps. These are methodologies taken from the book 'On the Plaza' by Low (Low, 2000). The analysed data describe the rhythms of everyday life. Routines, routes and practices are captured with these quantitative data collection. Data from unstructured interviews and semi-structured interviews have been added for a better understanding of the perceived space.

First of all, population counts were made to investigate the kind of visitors and their activities. The data collected were used to identify user groups and rhythms of use. For example the intensity of use of the site is revealed by the data, in particular differences between day and evening, and weekdays and the weekend. Furthermore, population counts attempted to distinguish tourists and locals and their duration of usage. Second, activities performed were observed and then drawn onto a map to show demarcation processes. The behavioural

maps illustrate the different areas suitable for different activities. They reveal the actual transformation of the space by its activities at specific spots. Comparisons between the different maps enable conclusions on how differences among groups are constructed, and how territory is claimed for specific activities.

In addition, movement maps were made to document the routes of the visitors. Movement maps show the main flows of people. They may disclose particular decision areas of users. Evidently, movements play a role by the construction of meaning. Paths followed or taken influence the experience of the area. Possibilities for mode of transport furthermore influence the experience of the area. Indeed, speed of movement influences the opportunities to perceive surroundings.

Lastly, collected quantitative data are enriched by personal impressions and short unstructured conversations with users. Field notes taken during the observation process function as a catalyser of ideas and they put forward important details. It cannot be neglected that being there for a longer time is essential for a good understanding of the area: '...to grasp a rhythm it is necessary to have been grasped by it; one must let oneself go, give oneself over, abandon oneself to its duration' (Lefebvre, 2004, p. 27). Low uses these kind of field notes as opening of her book. Thereby she introduces

Costa Rican plaza life in a readable and personal way. In the beginning, the field notes helped to grasp the atmosphere of the site. They inspired and fuelled the process of defining interview questions and constructing a well thought through methods section.

5.2.2 Interviews

Major part of the analysis consists of the documented conversations with users. The transcribed conversations enable verification of the observation data, especially the observed activities can be checked with information of the respondents. Most important, however, is that during the conversations respondents speak of their experiences and impressions at and of the site. In other words, interviews provide the researcher with the needed stories, as place is understood as a collection of stories. The art of collecting stories can be categorized as a narrative approach. This approach has been applied by several researcher who investigated the meaning of places (Low, 2000; Leary, 2009; Manzo, 2005; Dormans, 2008; Gustafson, 2001). Interviews are semi-structured with a permanent focus on the respondents' view on the area. Research questions are formulated on the basis of the concepts: activities, perceptions and stories, theoretical argumentation for the interview questions can be found in appendix A. In addition to the interviews with the users of the area some expert

interviews were done. Expert interviews are talks with key informants, with people who have expertise about the topic (Baarda & de Goede, 1997). These expert interviews provide an insight into the context of the case-study. They have mostly to do with the conceived space of the Cuvrybrache.

5.2.3 Photography

During the observations pictures are taken in order to visually explore the site. Out of the many pictures a selection is made to show the alternative aesthetics of the site and the performed activities. As argued in chapter 3, does the physical appearance play an important role for the construction of meaning. Therefore the visually story of the site cannot be absent. In other words, an photo-essay is one of the research methods which investigates the meanings of place. This research method has been successfully applied by several urban researches. I am inspired by the books 'Spaces of Uncertainty', 'The spaces between buildings' and the book 'Tussenland' by Ruimtelijk Planbureau (Cupers & Miessen, 2002; Ford, 2000; Ruimtelijk Planbureau, 2004). These are all academic books that include extensive photo-essays which tell their own story, and in my opinion even clarify aspects which cannot be explained by using words.

I realise that pictures are my personal construction of the site, it is my view on the site. Yet, the selection of events and

objects that are photographed is partly based on information of users. As has been noted, the different research methods reinforce each other, so the stories told by respondents can be enriched by photography and the photography influences thoughts on the alternative aesthetics of indeterminate spaces. I am convinced that photography is essential for the research, and that it effectively investigated physical features and performed activities. An extra note on the use of photography in human geographic research which I underline: 'Just as there should be an 'art' to ethnographic description, for example, surely there should be room in academic work for the art of photography.' (Crang & Cook, 2007, p. 108).

5.3 Research design and data gathering

Each research methodology and the procedures are outlined below.

5.3.1 Case selection

Essential for a successful research about indeterminate spaces is the selection of the case. Results and their value depend on a well chosen research area. The idea for this research developed during a visit of Berlin in 2008. During walks and S-Bahn rides I observed empty spaces throughout the whole city. It made me curious: Why are they there? What do they mean for the Berlin citizens?'. In particular, the latter question became

the focus of this master thesis. So, it was obvious to choose a site in Berlin because it all started there. Furthermore, as has been shown in chapter 3, entails Berlin many indeterminate spaces that are often temporary used. Therefore, I started searching for a good case study within Berlin. However, indeterminate spaces can be found in almost all de-industrialised cities in the Western world and it is because of this fact that this research may provide valuable insights for all these cities. The Cuvrybrache was found after an intensive search that consisted of walking and cycling through the city, the study of literature on temporary use in Berlin, and talks with different people. Notes were made during the searching process, and sites found were evaluated by the following criteria: diverse temporary use, informal character, and its accessibility. Finally, the site was discovered through a student from dr. Lossau (contact at the Humboldt University Berlin). After several observations it was clear that the Cuvrybrache situated in Kreuzberg fulfilled all the criteria formulated at the beginning of the process. Although it is not suggested that this a completely objective process, case-study selection has a lot to do with pragmatism (Leary, 2009). The Cuvrybrache was the best case for me to study at that moment, with its central location, informal character and famous graffiti piece.

Weekend	
Saturday 19 Sept.	Sunday 20 Sept.
Saturday 26 Sept.	Sunday 27 Sept.
Week	
Tuesday 22 Sept.	Wednesday 23
	Sept.
Tuesday 29 Sept.	Wednesday 30
	Sept.

Table 2: Observations days September 2009
Source: Author

Time
9:00-10:00
12:00-13:00
15:00-16:00
18:00-19:00
21:00-22:00

Table 3: Day scheme of observations

Source: Author

5.3.2 Population counts

As noted population counts are made to identify characteristics of visitors and their activities, here is outlined how the procedure of counting took place. Actual observations took place at the end of September after finishing an intense German language course in July, searching for the right location in August, and doing the first explanatory fieldwork at the beginning of September. In other words, planning restrictions created by the Master programme and the progress that was made led to an observation period in September. Use of the Cuvrybrache would certainly have been different in the middle of Summer.

Table 2 shows the observation days, during the second week summer slowly changed into autumn. It was assumed (based on common knowledge, and observations) that there would be a difference between activities during the week and the weekend, therefore Tuesday and Wednesday were chosen as representative of the week and Saturday and Sunday for the weekend. It might be the case that a different population visits the location on Sunday then on Thursday. This was one of Low conclusion during her research on plaza life. She observed that on Sundays more families visited the plaza (Low, 2000). Two weeks of observations created the opportunity to observe a wide variety of activities and the influence of the

weather on results is reduced by a longer period of analysis. Table 3 shows the observation scheme of one single day. The periods of observation are chosen to capture different uses. The distribution over the day aims at illustrating differences between morning, lunch time and evenings. It enabled to answer questions like: 'Does use change over the day?' And 'What kind of visitors are there and at which moment of the day?'. Observations stopped after 22:00, because an observation trial showed that at the end of September almost no one visits the Cuvrybrache at night as it becomes too cold. Thus, observation results say something about the use during the day and evening (9:00-22:00), experiences during the night are not highlighted.

In order to structure the observations a form was made (see Appendix B). For each user/visitor the observer had to note:

- Time of arrival Time of pull out
- Sex
- Age group (0-12, 13-19, 20-39, 40-59, 60-79)
- Tourist/ LocalActivity (drinking, eating, chatting, reading, looking around, Spree look, walk the dog, photographing, other activity)

In addition to gender and age the origin of the user is identified: local or tourist. If a visitor takes pictures, gazes around,

talks in a foreign language, and/or wears typical tourist attributes as a map he/she is identified as a tourist. It is acknowledged that a local could also speak a foreign language and that he also might take pictures of the site, but this happens less. So, there is an uncertainty with the population counts, yet they it gives a rough impression of the kind of visitors.

5.3.3 Behavioural maps

Individuals constrict difference by claiming certain areas at a space. By sitting, hanging, or yelling users claim a small area at the Cuvrybrache. Each first fifteen minutes of the observation activities of users are drawn onto a map. Activity and claimed area are described with a circle and some key words. After collecting all these maps (5*8=40) two representative days are selected and these maps are transformed into digital maps. Computer program Adobe Illustrator is used to draw the maps digitally.

5.3.4 Movement maps

Similar to the behavioural maps are the movement maps created by the observations. Paths and pauses are drawn onto a map and these sketches are digitally transferred. Adobe illustrator offers the opportunity to lay layer over layer, when all paths are brought together a new perspective on the movements appears. Path, over path over path show the most com-

mon routes through the area, and it reveals the spots where most people stand still for a moment. Whereas behaviour is observed in the first fifteen minutes of the observation hour, movements are documented in the last fifteen minutes. This results in 40 movement maps, for two days these movement maps are digitally transferred and one map summarizes the movements.

5.3.5 Critical notes on observations

Some critical reflections must be made on the results of observations. Data were collected solely by the author of this thesis. For *one* person it is not always possible to observe everything that is going on in the area. There were moments that just too many visitors were there. Observations in the evening were a bit harder, because the view was limited. Also, the influence of the observer on other visitors cannot be neglected. The area is not that crowded, so the observer may easily influence other visitors behaviour. It might be the case that I was sitting on the favourite spot of someone, and if he saw me sitting there he decided to leave the area. Another example is my gaze which is mostly directed towards the area. So the river lies behind me, in contrast to most people that look at the river. It is, nevertheless, hard to avoid any possible influence and almost certainly behaviour did not change that dramatically.

5.3.6 Interview procedure

The results from the observations are checked and enriched by semi-structured in-depth interviews. Based on the described concepts and the literature on indeterminate spaces (chapter 2) interview questions were formulated. In Appendix A the interview questions arranged to the concepts can be found. This list of questions was meant as a basis for the conversation, yet it was not leading. All interviews are seen as conversations and the topics that users brought up were followed. In other words, the interviewer adapted his questions to the stories told by respondent. During the process of interviewing and observing new concepts that were put forward by respondents were analysed and then further investigated by new interviews. Continuously, questions were refined and stories, concepts found were checked by other respondents until a point of saturation was reached. Hence, theoretical sampling has been applied to data gathering process and as far as possible within the given time and circumstances has been aimed for a sufficient development of concepts (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

The face-to-face interviews mostly took place at the area itself in order to activate memories by respondents and enable them to refer to the surroundings. It made descriptions of the area easier and respondents could provide explanation for their behaviour. Each interview was tape-recorded with the permission of the participant. No one declined being recorded. English was the preferred language for the interviews, which brings the interviewer and respondent on the same level as both speak a second language. At the start of the interview it was suggested to use German words, if they feel the need to. During the interview process my level of German speaking was improving, , therefore most later interviews were done in German. This significantly enriched the data as respondents could express themselves better in their native language. My experience was that my inability to speak perfect German made it easier to ask 'stupid' questions, like: 'What do you mean by ...?'. These short questions often resulted in new stories, and more extensive explanation of their experiences. Interviews were analysed in original language, and quotes were not translated because meaning may be lost in the translation. Content of the German quotes are always explained in the main text.

The sample of respondents is related to the development of concepts and it aims to reflect the different users of the site. Observations pointed to following general user groups: hangout, graffiti, guerrilla gardening, dog/daily user, lunch/coffee. On the site were respondents contacted and asked if they were willing to cooperate. Most people did so and were pleasantly

Table 4: Characteristics responde

	пате	gender	Age	national- ity	main activity	Date	English or Ger- man
1	Katherina	f	38	German	dog	18-08-09	E
2	Carla	f	26	Italian	hang-out	23-08-09	E
3	Hannah	f	26	German	hang-out	23-08-09	E/G
4	Stefan	m	31	German	hang-out	29-08-09	E
5	Markus	m	24	German	hang-out	29-08-09	E
6	Jonas, Nina	m, f	21, 21	German	hang-out	19-09-09	E
7	Josie	f	38	Australian	hang-out	19-09-09	E
8	Paul	m	15	German	graffiti	19-09-09	G
9	Henry	m	23	French	guerrilla garden	22-09-09	E
10	Róisín	f	25	English	guerrilla garden	23-09-09	E
11	Myrthe	f	36	French	coffee/lunch	23-09-09	E
12	Mareike	f	28	German	hang-out	27-09-09	E
13	Ismael, Achmed	m, m	16, 16	German	hang-out	28-09-09	G
14	Andreas	m	31	German	hang-out	30-09-09	E
15	Lisa	f	44	German	dog	1-10-09	G
16	Christian, Hans	m, m	20, 19	German	Graffiti	07-10-09	G
17	Linda	f	28	German	view	21-10-09	G
18	Tom	m	30	German	graffiti	29-10-09	G
19	Susanne	f	23	German	coffee/lunch	5-11-09	G
20	Laura, Sebastian	f, m	26, 22	German	hang-out	19-11-09	G

Table 5: Expert interviews

Siegfried Rudolph	Urban Planner district Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain					
Carsten Joost	Media Spree Versenken activist, architect					
Sebastian Holt- kamp	Urban Planner in Berlin					
Ingo Bader	Urban Researcher at the TU					
Stacey Anderson	Tour guide at 'Alternative tours Berlin'					

surprised after the conversation due to its unusual character. An interview took approximately 30 minutes. Duration depended on the collected experiences, as some of respondents were at the site just for the first or second time and others came there each week. There is no need for complete coverage of the user groups, because this is a qualitative research which tries to provide an in-depth understanding of users' experiences. Table 4 shows the characteristics of respondents and their fictional names (to ensure anonymity).

As has been noted the temporary users were approached at the Cuvrybrache, some were contacted via respondents. Persons for the expert interviews were found through internet search and through other experts. Three appointments were cancelled by respondents, respectively a graffiti sprayer, a woman who took the dog for a walk and a tourist guide of Sandeman Tours. The graffiti artist Blu, who made the two big graffiti's, was also contacted through e-mail, but he did not have time for an interview. BLU advised me to contact Lutz Henke (Chairman of art association Artitude), as he was the initiator of the two Graffiti pieces. He was interviewed as one of the temporary users, because he is also a regular user of the place. Considering the expert interviews (Table 5) did Wrangelkiez Quartiersmanagement advise to contact Siegfried Rudolph, an urban planner at the Kreuzberg

district. Bader was contacted, because he wrote a scientific article about gentrification and Kreuzberg. He brought me in contact with Media Spree Versenken activist Joost. Finally, to add some reflection on the planning process urban planner Holtkamp (employee of an urban planning company in Berlin) was contacted via one of the respondents. In order, to analyse tourist specific behaviour at the Cuvrybrache, tour guide Stacey Anderson was interviewed. She told about how she introduces the Cuvrybrache to the tourists, and about their reactions on the place.

5.3.7 Photography procedure

The Cuvrybrache was visited during the whole research period (September 2009 till June 2010) pictures were taken continuously. During the analysis of observation data and interview data all pictures were collected in a single map. In order to get a feel again of the site all pictures were examined. Through a dialogue between images and collected stories pictures were selected that relate to each other, in order to 'write' the several photo-essays of this thesis.

5.4 Analysis of the data

The tape-recorded interviews are transcribed and contentanalysed for common themes by conducting successive readings of the interview transcripts (Manzo, 2005). Central

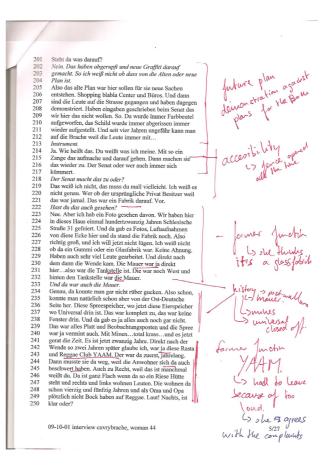


Figure 13: Coded interviews *Source: van Duppen, 2010*

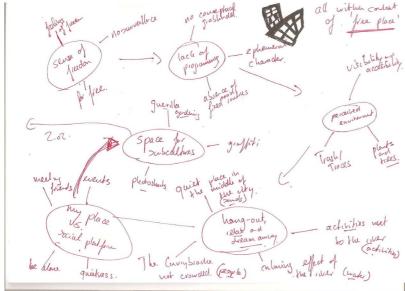


Figure 14: Code map

Source: van Duppen, 2010

concepts during the interviews are activities, stories, and perceptions. The freeware programme 'TransScriber' was used to play, pause and play the recordings, which enabled a faster transcribing process (Transcriber, 2009). 'Basics of Qualitative Research 3th edition' from Corbin and Strauss and 'Doing Ethnographies' by Crang and Cook are the methodology books used for the accurate research tools.

Thus, first were the recordings transcribed. Then, the open coding processes started with re-reading all the material to get a better understanding of it. After that each interview was read and the emphasis was on: '...what was being said and what the meaning and intent of each statement(your own as well as other people's) might have been.' (Crang & Cook, 2007). Words, sentences and sections of the interview were then coded. I have chosen to print all the transcripts and do the open coding by hand, because it gives more freedom to think and note done ideas (Figure 13). Along the whole process I used a paper for theoretical notes, and notes about the codes. This first coding round was followed up by re-reading of the interviews and thereby noting down all the codes. Here comes the computer programme Maxqda into the process. The hand coded text was transferred into the computer programme.

Maxqda enables to label parts of the text with several codes. During this process the similar labels were put together and became one code. I then, have tended: 'to sketch out possible patterns and linkages between these codes by placing them

in little boxes on an A4 sheet, drawing lines/arrows between them and thereby constructing a "code map".' (Crang and Cook, 2007). Through the drawing an redrawing of these maps (Figure 14) I thought through the key themes within the interviews and the relationships they have. Themes were selected and related to subthemes, this was all done within Maxqda, and results in the code list (Appendix D). With the programme codes can easily be refined. The final text was written based on this process of successive rereading, coding, refinement of codes and the analysis of relationships between key themes.



Figure 15: Berlin and its districts, 2010

Source: Wikimedia, 2010

Figure 16 (up-right): Areal Photo, Riverfront area (Spree Raum) 2009 Source: Berlin Senatsverwaltung – FIS-Broker, 2010

Figure 17 (down-right): Areal Photo, The Cuvrybrache in Berlin, 2009 Source: Berlin Senatsverwaltung – FIS-Broker, 2010





This chapter looks at what lies on the desks of urban planners, it focuses on the ideas behind the designs for buildings. The study of planning documents and conversations with urban professionals reveal the conceived space of the Cuvrybrache. First, a brief historical overview of urban plans and their influence of the Cuvrybrache is given, followed by a discussion about the Media Spree project and its backgrounds. Finally, a leap forward is taken towards the relationship between the conceived space and the spatial practices and lived space.

6.1 Historical overview of urban plans and functions

This reconstruction of urban designs for the Cuvrybrache and its planning process is based on conversations with Siegphried Rudolph who works at the urban development and planning department of Bezirksamt Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Carsten Joost spokesmen of 'Media Spree versenken!', Holtkamp an urban planner in Berlin who works for a company, and Ingo Bader DFG fellow of the Transatlantic Research Program Berlin/New York at the Center for Metropolitan Studies. The landowner IVG did not answer on several requests for a conversation. In addition to these conversations planning documents and news articles were

analysed for the following brief overview of urban planning at the Cuvrybrache.

Before the historical overview starts one must note the location of the case-study. The Cuvrybrache is located within former West-Berlin, in the district Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain (Figure 15). At the north east of Kreuzberg lies the neighbourhood Wrangelkiez, in which the Cuvrybrache is embedded. Figure 16, 17 shows the urban planning context of the wasteland, this is an areal photo of the Media Spree planning area.



Figure 18: Building plot Cuvrystraβe 50/51 Source: Stadtplanungsamt, 2005

6.1.1 Accumulation of strategic reserves

During the eighties the plot at the Cuvrystraße was used for storing goods. This was directly related to the political situation in Berlin. Since the blockade in 1948 West-Berlin laid in supplies to prevent West-Berlin from starvation and lack of coal. The site at the Cuvrystraße was one of the places were coal and other supplies were stored (Rudolph, 2009). Figure 18 clearly shows the area near the river that enabled ships to hold and transfer the goods on to the land. Figure 19 in ad-

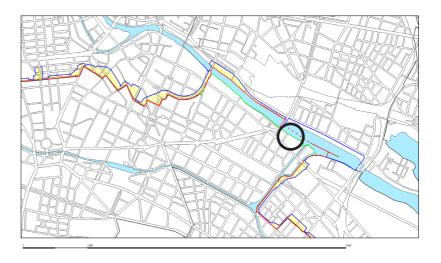


Figure 19: Route of the Berlin Wall

Source: Berlin Senatsverwaltung - FIS-Broker, 2010

dition reveals that the plot was located close to the border of East-Berlin, the so-called political border (Politische Grenze) was in the middle of the river.

6.1.2 Plot sold to Botag

After the fall of the wall there was no need for reserves. Therefore the Berlin government tried to sell the plot (Rudolph, 2009). During an optimistic period where the re-united Berlin was planned with the prospects of 5 million

inhabitants and significant economic growth the plot was sold to BOTAG in 1992. Thus, the plot was for sale for three years. Neo-liberal politics were introduced in the new Berlin. Public property was sold to private owners to develop new offices, shopping malls and other facilities. Thereby the public influence was diminished, but the Berlin government argued that it had not much choice as they needed income for re-uniting the city (Bader, 2009).

6.1.3 Temporary function – the Beach bar YAAM

BOTAG provided a temporary lease contract to the beach bar YAAM. YAAM is rooted within *urban* culture. It is an important spot for African culture in Berlin with its music, food, graffiti, and skate events. Due to complaints about the noise the venue had to move. BOTAG tries to prevent conflicts with the neighbours, because they hope to realise their building plans without fierce protests (Rudolph, 2009). Shortly after the forced movement of the YAAM Bar the buildings were demolished (Figure 20). (YAAM is at the moment located at another plot along the river Spree. The bar is still active and important for the urban scene in Berlin.)



Figure 20: Pictures of the demolished buildings,

Source: Hanke, 2010



6.1.4 Design for Technology centre

At the banks of the river Spree (Kreuzberger side) were industrial functions dominant (Figure 21 and see Figure 22 for the industrial zone along the spree). The urban planning department (Bezirksamt) wanted to sustain this axe of industry within the city and demanded from BOTAG a plan related to industry. Yet, BOTAG thought of realising an office complex at the plot. After long discussions a compromise was found: a technology centre (Rudolph, 2009). These plans were never realised for unknown reasons.



Figure 21: Technology center – Schuwirth, Ermann Architekten (1993) Source: Stadtplanungsamt, 2005

6.1.5 Design for shopping centre

Then, BOTAG wished to built a shopping centre. Several designs were made and proposed (Figure 23, Figure 24). The urban planning department gave permission to build the 'Cuvry centre', but the investor never signed the contract. It is unclear what the investors' reasoning was for this decision. Probably due to a combination of severe protests from the neighbourhood and the realisation of new shopping centres throughout whole Berlin (Rudolph, 2009). There was a neighbourhood initiative which organised several protests against the plans for a shopping centre. People even chained themselves around the big chestnut tree to save it from new constructions. Inhabitants criticised the plans for being disruptive for local socio- economics and for the building structure: 'Das Herbeizwingen eines GroßProjekts, welches am lokalen Bedarf und Potential vorbeiplant, ist eine gezielte Kampfansage an die Menschen von Ort, wo infolge wachsender gesellschaftlicher Perspektivlosigkeit vielen eine sozioökonomische Deklassierung und Entwurzelung droht. (Rohleder & Koschmieder, 1999). Besides this social pressure the developer faced competition from the new shopping centre at Treptower which would probably be too close to the Cuvry-centre. Therefore property investors were uncertain about returns on their investments.

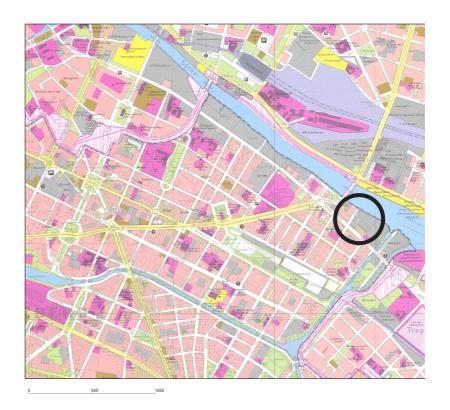


Figure 22: Planned Functions (Flächennutzungsplan), Kreuzberg, 1986 Source: Berlin Senatsverwaltung – FIS-Broker, 2010



Figure 23: Concept study shopping centre – Design atelier 4d Architekten (1997) Source: Stadtplanungsamt, 2005



Figure 24: Cuvry-centre Kreuzberg – Urbanistica Berlin Pieper + Partner (1998) Source: Stadtplanungsamt, 2005

6.1.6 Senat takes over

In 1999 the Berliner Senat takes over the responsibility for the planning process from Bezirksamt Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain. The Senat argues that the plot is important for the whole city and is eager to speed up the developing process (in their opinion Bezirksamt acted to slowly and was too concerned about local complaints) (Bader, 2009). Thus, the Cuvrybrache became of city-wide interest, which had as consequence that BOTAG discussed the future of the site with the Senat. Shortly afterwards the building permit changed, which allowed BOTAG to realise a wide range of functions, from office, housing, to sport, and culture (Rohleder & Koschmieder, 1999). The old and renewed planning permissions can be seen at Figure 22 and Figure 25. In 1986 the area was conceived as a 'Gewerbe und Industriegebiet' which changed into 'Gemischte Baufläche M2' in 1999.

6.1.7 BOTAG bankrupt, IVG new land owner

The company BOTAG went bankrupt. IVG bought the whole firm for, probably, a bargain price, because of the worse state of BOTAG (Rudolph, 2009). IVG is a big investing company active in several countries (see Box 1). The ownership of the Cuvrybrache was transferred to IVG as a consequence of this transmission. It happened at the time when expectations shifted. The re-uniting bubble of the early nineties exploded,

Box 1: IVG worldwide company (IVG, 2009)

- 5.4 billion privately owned estates
- 22.4 billion assets under management
- 40 Special funds and Mandates
- Active throughout Europe
- Owner of Universal office and the warehouse next to it

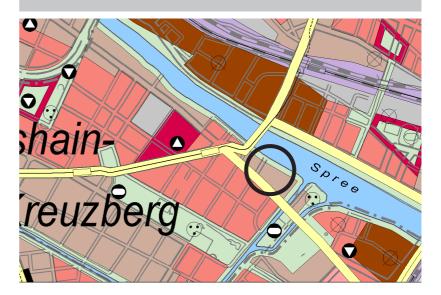


Figure 25: Planned functions (Flächennutzungsplan), Kreuzberg, Berlin, 2009

Source: Berlin Senatsverwaltung – FIS-Broker, 2010



Figure 26: Cuvryhof – Architektur Büro Reinhard Müller GmbH (2001) Source: Stadtplanungsamt, 2005

predicted growth was not realised. Returns on building projects were low. Therefore it is expected that IVG did not pay an enormous amount of money for the site, although it can be also the case that it all happened just before this shift (Bader, 2009). This would explain the ambitious plans they have designed at that time. A conversation with IVG would have clarified their motives for their proposed plans, but they never answered on numerous requests.

6.1.8 Neue Spreespeicher – Offices, lofts and a hotel

In 2002 IVG presented the new plan for the Cuvrybrache: 'Neue Spreespeicher'. It is a design for two large buildings and a hotel (Figure 26, 27). The eight storey high buildings will contain different sized bureaus and lofts (see Box 2). IVG and its daughter company Wertkonzept aim at offices inhabited by creative companies. They argue that media companies will be attracted by the city Berlin and that cooperation and competition will develop with the two buildings at the other side of the river, respectively the media company Universal and the smaller media companies in the other building (Rudolph, 2009). The whole plan fits into the Media Spree urban plan, which aims at creating a creative cluster at the borders of the Spree, more about Media Spree later in this chapter.

Box 2: Facts about Neuespreespeicher *Source: Neue Spreespeicher*, 2009

- 120 to 30 000 square meter Office-lofts
- up to 1300 square meter for Gastronomy
- up to 3200 square meter for Retail businesses
- underground garage with 160 parking places

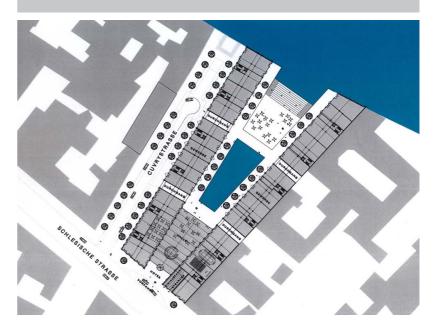


Figure 27: Cuvryhof – Architektur Büro Reinhard Müller GmbH (2001) Source: Stadtplanungsamt, 2005

Bezirksamt was glad with the Neue Spreespeicher plan. Finally buildings will be realised at the empty plot, which are related to developments at the other side of the river:

"Zum eine wollte man das diese Brache verschwindet. Das auf dem Grundstuck endlich was passiert. Und dann könnte man das ganz gut vorstellen in die Ergänzung das auf Kreuzberger Seite so eben auch so eine Entwickelung beginnt wie auf die andere Seite." (Rudolph, 2009)

The above quote shows that the Berlin government desires economic developments, just look at the phrase: 'endlich was passiert', which illustrates the severe economic situation of Berlin described in Chapter 3. Until now, however, building has not started. IVG still searches for companies who want to rent an office at the Neue Spreespeicher (Berliner Zeitung, 2009). They need to get at least 60% to 80% of the offices sold or rented, before the first stone is laid. Banks only provide loans for building if these percentages are reached. IVG could also solely finance the building, but this leads to higher risks. As building permits expire after three years, the investor had to apply for an extension each year. Up to 2010 these extensions were provided to IVG. There was an absence of discussions about it within the urban planning department (Rudolph, 2009). The Senat has always been in favour of

the development, and the Bezirksamt sees it as normal that buildings are realised at a site was always been built upon. In 2008 an alternative plan was handed in at Bezirks level by a political group. Yet, Bezirksamt is not in charge, and the Senat decided to stick with the Neue Spreespeicher project. It will probably take some years before the Neue Spreespeicher plans are realised, because of the world wide financial crisis, and the weak local economic conditions.

Neue Spreespeicher will contrast with the Wrangelkiez's local economy of small businesses and creative entrepreneurs. Wrangelkiez has been characterized by urban researcher Heebels as: 'a multicultural quarter which has many small shops and an active street life.' (Heebels, 2006). Wrangelkiez has several *Hinterhöfe* (business courtyards) that consist of a traditional and -creative companies, often mixed with residences. In between these Hinterhöfe will the Neue Spreespeicher be realised. Mr. Rudolph acknowledges that the project has a completely different function as the other functions in the neighbourhood. He notes that especially small companies are located in the Schlesische Straåe, and that for the realisation of the Neue Spreespeicher a large company is needed. Without a large company willing to move to the Neue Spreespeicher the project will never be built. The urban planner mentions that some have doubts about this

new mix. He, however, emphasizes on the latest developments in the neighbourhood. Within some years the influx of small companies and bars have turned a deprived neighbourhood into a lively area. The Bezirksamt suggests that the Neue Spreespeicher will even more revive the area (Rudolph, 2009).

6.2 Media Spree – a neoliberal urban planning project

As has been noted Neue Spreespeicher is part of the Media Spree project, which entails a redevelopment of the water-front area. To provide a better understanding of the project at the Cuvrystraße 50/51, the Media Spree developments must be studied. If one searches for some information about Media Spree, then it seems that it does not exist anymore: the website www.mediaspree.org is blank, and the former office cannot be visited anymore. What was the Media Spree then? What has it become? Who protested against it? and How does this all influence the situation at the Cuvrybrache? These question are all answered here.

6.2.1 What is Media Spree?

It has never been very clear to citizens what the Media Spree project was. The next paragraph from a Zitty article (a magazine about cultural life in Berlin) clearly poses this question. The reporter describes the start of a conversation between Christian Meyer (an urban planner in charge of the Media Spree project), and the spokesmen of the protest group 'Media Spree versenken':

,Es ist sein Büro, er hat einen Heimvorteil, an der Wand lehnen zwei riesige Abzüge von dem, was einmal der Begriff Media Spree bedeuten konnte, es sind computeranimierte Bilder, Zukunftsvisionen, eine Ahnung von etwas. In der Wirklichkeit Berlins gibt es nichts, was Media Spree ist, es gibt nur diesen Begriff, er schwirrt seit Wochen und Monaten durch Berlin und ist für viele ein Synonym für hässliche Stadtumstrukturierung und rucksichtlose Verwirklichung von Groβinvestoren-Träumen. Ist das alles? Oder ist es noch viel schlimmer? Was Media Spree wirklich ist, ist zunächst einmal: schwer zu durchschauen.' (Zitty, 2008)

The Zitty reporter describes the unrest in the city about the Media Spree plans. In reality nothing of the Media Spree exists, it is just the term that citizens associate with terrible urban regeneration plans and merciless realisation of big investors dreams. This is the moment to clarify our view a bit. Media Spree started in 2002 as a private marketing organization for the area's real estate owners (Scharenberg & Bader, 2009). It was transformed into a public-private partnership in

may 2004, with the task to bring interests together. It should be the contact for local companies and it should attract new firms to the area (Zitty, 2008). Media Spree became the non-profit company 'Media Spree Regional management e.V.', Scharenberg and Bader about this transformation: 'While 'e.V.' stands for eingetragener Verein and refers to a legal status (roughly: incorporated association) which mandates that the company is required to execute public interests, and, therefore, is exempt from taxation, it is in fact dominated by real estate interests.' (Scharenberg & Bader, 2009, p. 329). Thus, a new established institution presents itself as serving the public interests, but actually is mainly concerned with real-estate interests.

Hence, Media Spree Regional Management e.V. fits into the pattern of neo-liberal 'New urban policy' in European cities described by Swyngedouw et al., as it is neither democratically controlled nor accountable (Scharenberg & Bader, 2009). Large urban development projects are associated with 'new forms of "governing" urban interventions, characterized by less democratic and more elite-driven priorities.' (Swyngedouw et al., 2002). Only land owners could be members of the association Media Spree, while representatives of the Senat were just part of the advisory board which holds little power. To summarize, the Berlin Senat started an asso-

ciation together with real-estate developers that falls outside the standard democratic planning procedures. This institution has as task to brand the upcoming urban developments.

New flagship developments and marketing companies should realise the elite-driven priorities: lurge large (international) companies into the area. The Regional Management has tried to turn the name Media Spree into a brand for the area, in order to attract (creative) business and investors (Heebels, 2006). The Senat believes that the attraction of these companies will bring in jobs and foster a trickle-down effects (Scharenberg & Bader, 2009). The economic imaginary 'creative city' had its influence on the Media Spree developments. The creative city concept sees the creative class as the engine of economic growth for a city. Richard Florida argues that companies follow the labour force. According to him urban authorities should anticipate on the wishes of the creative class: an attractive residential environment, cultural diversity, a tolerant social climate and a vibrant cultural scene (Florida, 2002; Beekmans, 2009). During the last decade more and more cities based their economic strategies on these thoughts about urban development. Beekmans formulates it as follow: 'One can say that Richard Florida's ghost is roaming throughout Europe these days, directly affecting urban authorities to unfold policy aimed at stimulation of the knowledge

economy in their highly internationalized cities.' (Beekmans, 2009). Media Spree is an example of these newly introduced policies.

Economic imaginaries articulate urban strategies and visions (Jessop, 2004), which is also the case for the creative city concept. In practice this means that the Senat has declared the media and music industry as one of the focus area's for economic growth, Media Spree should be the area to realise this:

Figure 25: Map of Mediaspree plan Source: Mediaspree Magazine 2007

"Film, Musik, Mode – das ist Berliner Business: Der Senat hat sie zu "zu Wirtschaftlichen Kernen" erklärt, die die Stadt ökonomisch voranbringen sollen. Im "Kompetenzfeld Medien-, Kommunikations- und Kulturwirtschaft" setzten im Jahr 2006 rund 23 000 Berliner Unternehmen etwa 17,5 Milliarden Euro um.' (Tagesspiegel, 2009)

According to the Seant offered the creative sector offered around 160 000 Berliners a job. They emphasize on its enormous growth potential, although these optimistic statements can be questioned. Both IVG and the Senat conceive the Cuvrybrache as the next best spot for media companies.



It should be an addition to the Universal office, and the *Getreidespeicher* a renovated warehouse which is inhabited by creative companies.

Figure 28 shows the waterfront area and the designed or realised plans for the 1.8 square kilometres big development area. A new cluster of creative companies, apartments and other facilities should be built at the 3.7 kilometre long area. The O2 Arena is already realised, it is a multi-functional stadium holding 17.000 spectators with its own entrance at the river Spree (part of the Berlin wall has been moved to enable an open view onto the river). International stars perform there, and the local ice hockey team plays its matches. Before the O2 Arena was built, Universal Music Germanv decided to move its office to Berlin. This was highly appreciated by Bezirksamt and Senat (Rudolph, 2009). Not far from Universal, MTV Central Europe opened its office. In the South East stands the prominent Allianz Tower, hosting several companies in the office building. Although these are all prominent and important buildings, most of the plans still have to built. In Bader's words: '... there is a huge gap between the extend of the intended projects presented in Media Spree's glossy marketing magazines, and projects which actually

Figure 28: Pictures of protests on the street.

Source: Flickr, 2010





have a scheduled construction start date, such as the small and medium-scale developments for creative industries and loft living which have been recently established or were already established.' (Scharenberg & Bader, 2009, p. 329). He notices a gap between ambitious plans and the actual realisation of smaller projects for small media companies.

6.2.2 Protests against Media Spree and its consequences

Zitty's description of the conversation between Meyer and 'Media Spree versenken' already revealed that a lot of critique has been given on the Media Spree plans in Berlin. 'Media Spree versenken!' can be qualified as a successful urban social movement. Their main achievement has been a successful initiative for a referendum about the Media Spree plans. Concrete proposals were supported by a majority of the voters: 'all construction would have to be at a minimum distance of 50 metres away from the riverbank; buildings would not be higher than the traditional Berlin's eaves height (height according to Wilhelmian style); and plans for a new Spree bridge would be abandoned.' (Scharenberg & Bader, 2009, p. 332). The referendum was not politically binding, it however increased pressure on politicians and led to new negotiations. Still, not much will probably change, because most building permits are already given (Rudolph, 2009).

Maybe one of the main achievements of the 'Media Spree versenken' movement is that the Media Spree does not longer exist since 2009. The Senat and Bezirks could no longer justify funding an institution that supports plans opposed by citizens. The Media Spree e.V. burned its fingers with their marketing campaigns. Yes, they have succeeded in making the project well-known, but this had unwelcome effects. Suddenly, a social movement had a clear target for protests. The 'label' Media Spree made it easier to oppose the urban plans. Therefore, real-estate developers decided to dismantle the organisation and start a new one. Instead of a publicly visible organisation, they founded an 'Interessengemeinschaft' which only contains private actors and does not have a website or other publications (Joost, 2009).

The plans for the Cuvrystraße must be placed within this volatile context of Media Spree marketing campaigns and protests. Most Berliners became aware of Media Spree and its possible consequences due to the social movement 'Media Spree versenken!'. According to Carsten Joost (one of the leaders of the movement) the main focus of the protest group was on the pieces of land owned by the government or governmental organisations. If they could achieve changes in the plans for these plots, than it will probably have influence on the privately owned plots. This means that they did not focus

100

that much on the Cuvrystra β e as it is owned by an investor (Joost, 2009). The movement nevertheless raised awareness, and inhabitants protested against the Neue Spreespeicher plans.

Examples of these protests are the damaged announcing sign of the Neue Spreespeicher plans and the continuously forcefully opened fence. The described planning history already showed that inhabitants have a negative attitude towards all new proposals, which is typical NIMBY behaviour. Inhabitants do not want these developments in their backyard and react sensitive on every proposals (Rudolph, 2009). On the other hand did 'Media Spree versenken' organise several meetings to design alternative plans for the Cuvrystraße. Inhabitants raised their voice in these meetings. Their proposal was to develop experimental buildings, and pavilions open for the public. These buildings should have open structures, that enable users to implement their interpretations. In addition, a public green space should be made with open-air cinema facilities near the Spree (Mediaspree versenken!, 2009). So inhabitants proposed alternatives, although these are all not that realistic, because the plot is privately owned and the investor will not make enough money with these proposals.

IVG, the landowner, is aware of the 'explosive' situation at the borders of the Spree. They try to avoid conflicts with inhabitants of Wrangelkiez. IVG does not allow any temporary use since they have sent the bar YAAM away. They fear that temporary projects will get to popular within the neighbourhood, with might have as consequence that protests against the Neue Spreespeicher plan will be more intense. Initiators of the mobile garden project 'Nomadisch grun GmbH' tried to get a temporary lease contract for the Cuvrybrache in 2008. They presented their project of a mobile garden, with a small bar and education for children (Nomadisch Grun, 2010). IVG was not that open for this temporary use project, because they expected that residents would love the garden and this would cause difficulties for the office plans.

Besides the ignorance towards temporary projects clears IVG the area four times a year to prevent protests. Some man cut all the plants and trees and collect garbage. This is done to prevent claims about the value of the site for biodiversity. If trees would have grown freely during the last years, then the plot would have looked very green. Urban nature could provide arguments for protestors against the office plans and therefore the area is cleared (Rudolph, 2009). Sensitivity for urban green was already revealed by the protest against the clearance of the big chestnut tree (see section about the shop-

ping centre). Obviously, the clearance also enables a quick start of building if enough companies are found.

6.2.3 Influence of Media Spree on the Cuvrystraße

As mentioned before has the Media Spree neo-liberal planning project influence on the situation at the Cuvrystraße. This section should clarify the different aspects of this influence. First of all, fits the project into the concept of the creative city promoted by the Media Spree organization. These new buildings should be home to smaller and bigger firms active within the 'creative sector' (music, film, etc.). The Senat argues that this specific spot belongs to their focus on the growth sector of Berlin, which was revealed by their provision of a new building permission for the Cuvrybrache.

The Senat overruling the Bezirksamt is a sign of their neoliberal approach towards urban planning. The Senat supports the Media Spree planning and it was therefore that they were involved at the new planning for the Cuvrystraße. In other words, Media Spree e.V. became the context for the discussion about the future of the Cuvrystraße. The Senat representatives had 'Media Spree glasses' on while deciding about the urban designs for the empty plot along the Spree. These glasses are social constructions based on the economic imaginary 'creative city'. Next, Media Spree has influenced the discussions and protests about the Neue Spreespeicher plan. As described Media Spree versenken' organized meetings to design alternatives and it tried to change urban planning. Although theses attempts failed it added an extra component to the local discussion. Not just local neighbourhood issues were concerned, also a citywide discussion about public accessibility to the waterfront area was added. It must be noted however that 'Media Spree versenken' had its influence on the public debate and it raised concerns of Berlin inhabitants and therefore raised pressure on politicians, but it did not change the factual situation at the waterfront area. Building permission were already provided by the Senat and Bezirksamt, and amendments are hard to realise. Mister Schulz, mayor of the Bezirk Kreuzberg-Friedrichshain, states that he is powerless:

'Wo es rechtskräftige Baugenehmigungen gibt, sind wir machtlos", sagt Schulz. Bei Änderungen drohen Schadensersatzklagen des Investors. Prozesse will der Bezirk nicht riskieren. Zumal ihm dann der Entzug der Planungshoheit durch den Senat droht.' (Tages Spiegel, 2009)

The mayor says that the Bezirksamt risks legal proceedings if building permissions will be changed. Land owners will ask for financial compensation, which the Bezirk cannot afford. Moreover, Schulz risks that the Senat will take over the planning process, something he wants to prevent to happen.

Although Media Spree e.V. influenced the thoughts about waterfront developments its role must not be overestimated. Land owners negotiate with the urban planning department, not with the lobby organisation Media Spree (Rudolph, 2009; Bader, 2009; Holtkamp, 2009). In this case, IVG has to negotiate with the Senat about building permissions. These two parties sit around the table and at these meetings decisions are made. Although it is true that Media Spree has no concrete role it did influence the debate and build a discourse for specific functions and activities that 'need' to planned (Holtkamp, 2009). These are the social constructions of the economic imaginary 'creative city', which aims to realise creative cluster at the waterfront of Berlin.

6.3 Near future and the production of space

'Büromieter werden auch für die "Neuen Spreespeicher" der IVG Development GmbH gesucht. Das Unternehmen will die Brache an der Cuvrystraße 50/51 bebauen.' (Berliner Zeitung, 2009)

The above quote from the Berliner Zeitung illustrates the uncertain future of the empty plot along the Cuvryrstrasse. IVG still searches (since 2002) for companies that want to rent office spaces at Neue Spreespeicher. At the moment it is unclear when these companies will be found. There is the possibility that it will take some years before building will start, due to both the effects of Berlin's financial crisis during the nineties and the current worldwide financial crisis. Political and economic circumstances create a status-quo: building permission are provided, but a lack of tenants blockades the start of building. This status quo has as consequence that in the middle of Wrangelkiez a wasteland is situated. How is this wasteland seen by IVG, urban planners and inhabitants? In other words, how does the conceived space relate to the lived space of inhabitants?

For IVG the empty plot represents the possibility of earning money through realising the Neue Spreespeicher plan. The plot stands in the books for a value of €2.833.000 (IVG, 2009). Despite the fact that Berlin has a huge surplus of office space (see Chapter 3), IVG will not change its plan very soon, because with offices more money can be made than for example with residences (Holtkamp, 2009).

The next two chapters take into account the diverse meanings

that informal users have attached to the wasteland at the Cuvrystraße. It will, thus, present the spatial practices and the lived space of the Cuvrybrache. The informal users perform a wide variety of activities like: relaxing, graffiti spraying, grilling and guerrilla gardening and more.

IVG is probably aware of the current informal use of the Brache, but their opinion about it is unknown as they did not answer on request for an interview. Without a doubt, they do not appreciate that the fence is repeatedly opened up by inhabitants, because they have to fix it every time and it enables people to enter the wasteland. IVG is officially responsible if an accidents happens as they are the owner. Therefore it is expected that the current informal use is a thorn in the side for IVG.

Similarly to IVG does the Bezirksamt conceive the Cuvrybrache as the future site for offices, lofts and a hotel. Mr. Rudolph asked about the current informal answered:

"Was wissen Sie von die Benutzung gerade von diese Brache? Weil du hast jetzt erzählt dass du dass von U-Bahn gesehen hast. - Ich weiß davon eigentlich nicht viel. Ja, dass ist in die letzten Jahren so…auch immer ziemlich…gabt es ein starke Vegetation. Die dann auch mal

wieder berohdet wurde. Dann dass eben nicht zu grün wird. Ja. Und wie schon gesagt wenn ich bin dort in die Straße bewege nehme ich davon nicht viel war. Das einsinge von Wasser aus hab ich beobachtet, von der Brücke aus, das dort auch Leute am Ufer sitzen. Und es gab Zwischennutzungen. Es gab einmal ein Flohmarkt auf der Flache der ist aber nicht so gut gelaufen. Und der Yaam-club der jetzt auf die andere Seite ist, der war dort auch mal. Das gab es eigentlich Nutzungskonflikten weil die zu Laut waren. Deswegen müssen die wider runter.' (Rudolph, 2009).

Honestly, the urban planner from Bezirksamt acknowledges that he does not know that much about the current use of the Cuvrybrache. Although the site is not fully an 'empty spot' for him. He mentions the growth of plants and trees, and that they were cleared several times. Moreover, he tells about people sitting at the river side, which he saw from the Oberbaumbrücke. If he passes by he does not notice any use, because the fence makes a quick look onto the side impossible. Next, Mr. Rudolph mentions the different temporary uses that took place: the flea market and the bar YAAM. To conclude, his knowledge about the current use is not that extensive. He does not have an idea about the meaning of the indeterminate space for its current temporary users.

On the whole this chapter showed the conceived space of the empty plot along the Cuvrystraße. The presented history of urban plans consisted of a series of drawings, ideas and discussions about the future of the site. It made clear that there were ongoing negotiations between different actors (Senat, Bezirksamt, BOTAG, IVG, inhabitants, Media Spree, Media Spree versenken!) about the future of the empty plot. None of these plans are realised so far. At the moment, conceives the real estate developer IVG the Cuvrybrache as a space for offices, lofts an a hotel aimed at 'creative' companies. The neo-liberal urban planning project Media Spree provides the context for these developments. Berlin governors conceive the waterfront area as the spot for the economic growth sector 'creative industries'. Media Spree influenced the debate about the waterfront area and it build a discourse which influenced negotiations between urban planners and real estate developers. Yet, its influence was contested by the successful social urban movement 'Media Spree versenken!'.

As has been noted the Neue Spreespeicher has not been realised, due to the lack of companies that want to move into the office space. This status-quo has led to informal use of a wasteland which does not really exist for urban planners and real estate developers. In brief, Senat and the Bezirksamt do not acknowledge the current socio-value. For them the

spot mainly exists on maps, in architectural drawings and marketing terms and not in real life. The next two chapters 'Spatial practices at the Cuvrybrache' and 'The Cuvrybrache as free place' attempt to reveal the unknown stories of the current use of the Cuvrybrache. I aim to shift the attention from urban plans towards the current informal use of the Cuvrybrache. After listening to stories of urban professionals time has come to listen to the ones of citizens.

7. Spatial Practices at the Cuvrybrache

Informal users, different paths and uncertain locales

The previous chapter revealed the urban plans for the Cuvrybrache, it argued that building will probably not start in the near future. Therefore one might expect to see an unused piece of land on a visit at the Cuvrybrache. On the contrary, this chapter shows that this big piece of land along the Spree is used by quite a lot of people, in different ways. The following analysis of population counts, behavioural- and movement maps introduce the rhythms of everyday life of the Cuvrybrache. The results from observations outline the current use of the site. Its activities and users are presented in tables, diagrams, maps and enriched with field notes. Shown are the spatial practices of the users at an indeterminate space. Activities stay at the core of the analysis, as written in the theoretical part of this thesis. Observations attempted to map the characteristics of performed activities. It tried, in other words, to describe the 'locals, paths and projects' of the temporary users of an abandoned plot. Users construct meaning through their activities at an informal public space. Individuals produce the social and spatial boundaries with their daily routines and practices (Low, 2004). This chapter first presents the rhythms of use and the characteristics of use, to be followed by an analysis of movements, to end with a

description of the activities.

7.1 The informal users - Population Counts

In order to map the rhythms of use and to characterize users, visitors were counted during eight days. These days were spread over two weeks and took place at the Cuvrybrache (details of observation procedure can be found in Chapter 5). Results were transferred into tables, like Table 6 and Table 7 which show the amount of visitors for each observation period, and the categories of these visitors: gender, age and tourist/local (for other Tables see Appendix C).

Table 6: population count Saturday september 19th

time		Male	female	age 0-12	13-19	20-39	40-59	+62-09	tourist	local	visitors
9:00	10:00	1	1	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	2
12:00	13:00	10	7	О	0	11	5	2	6	11	17
15:00	16:00	24	19	1	2	30	10	О	16	27	43
18:00	19:00	15	17	1	0	26	2	3	14	18	32
21:00	22:00	14	4	1	0	13	4	О	4	14	18
Total		64	48	3	2	82	21	5	40	72	112

Table 7: population count Tuesday september 22th

time		Male	female	age 0-12	13-19	20-39	40-59	+6/-09	tourist	local	visitors
9:00	10:00	4	1	0	0	4	1	0	0	5	5
12:00	13:00	3	3	0	0	5	1	О	2	4	6
15:00	16:00	4	6	О	О	10	О	О	2	8	10
18:00	19:00	19	3	О	2	15	5	0	4	18	22
21:00	22:00	5	3	О	О	6	2	О	2	6	8
Total		35	16	0	2	40	9	О	10	41	51

Analysis of these population counts show differences in use between week and weekend, morning and evening. Moreover they reveal the main characteristics of the users, apparently the Cuvrybrache is male dominated and most visitors are aged between 20 to 39 years. These different aspects are discussed here.

7.1.1 Rhythms of use

Week versus weekend

To start with a look at the distribution of the visitors over the week. The next diagram shows that the amount of people using the Cuvrybrache was quite stable during the two weeks of observation. No extreme differences are found (Figure 29). During weekdays around 50 people visit the Cuvrybrache, with the exception of Tuesday 29th which was the only day with bad weather. Whereas during the weekend around 110 visitors are counted on a day. Only Sunday the 27th has more visitors (148), which can be explained by the visit of three groups. In the morning, a group of five guys hanged around after clubbing, which made this morning extremely populated in comparison to all other mornings. Then, in the afternoon a group of nine people did a photo shoot for a rock band. Moreover, there was a barbecue of six people in the evening and on top of that it was good weather the whole time. On the whole these data show that the Cuvrybrache is more crowded in the weekends, which is not that surprising as people have more free time then. Furthermore, do the population counts illustrate that the empty plot along the Spree is continuously used by people. Summing up, insofar it is possible to draw conclusions from eight days of observations, a clear pattern of use is observed.

Visitors during the day

Patterns of use also occur during the day (Figure 30). Mornings are quiet at the Cuvrybrache, with a mean of 4 visitors for both weekends and the week. At lunch time some more people (7) visit the place during the week. In the afternoon it gets more crowded (12), to have a peak in the early evening (18 visitors). This peak may be caused by people that have a drink at the empty plot just after their work. In the weekend, the peak of visitors lies in the afternoon (41). More people are able to pay a visit then, because they have less obligations.

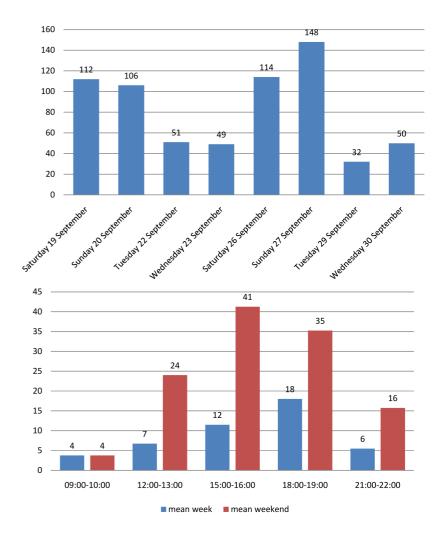
7.1.2 Characteristics of informal users

Age

The population counts make clear that the Cuvrybrache is mainly visited by people between 20 and 39 years old, 77% of the visitors belongs to this age category (Figure 31). Thus, people between 20 and 39 years old dominate the indeterminate space. Children and elderly people almost never visit the Cuvrybrache. Parents probably consider the environment as too dangerous for their children. Broken glass, dirt and the flooded basement do not necessarily create the safest of playgrounds. Elderly might avoid the Cuvrybrache, because of restricted accessibility and illegality. They could have more difficulties with trespassing, with sneaking onto the plot through slightly opened fences. Then there is a small group of teenagers visiting the Cuvrybrache (5%), some of them are graffiti sprayers and others hang out with friends. Although

Figure 29 Total visitors during the week

Figure 30: Mean visitors during the day, separated between week and weekend.



these results cannot be compared to population counts of for instance Görlitzer Park (an public park also located in Wrangelkiez), still can be said that a certain locale exists at the Cuvrybrache. In a random park in Berlin a more diversified group of people can be observed, this empty plot is clearly not used by children and elderly people.

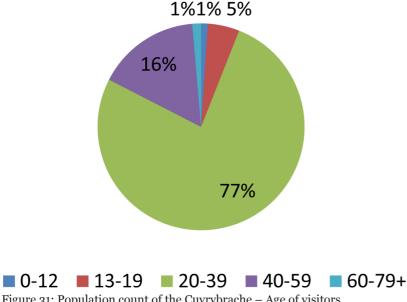


Figure 31: Population count of the Cuvrybrache – Age of visitors

Male versus female

More males visit the Cuvrybrache then females, respectively 67% male, and 33% female. In total were 662 people counted. For this male dominance some explanations are given. In the data can be seen that women prefer to visit the Cuvrybrache between 12:00 -13:00 (37,4 % of the visitors is female) and between 15:00-16:00 (34,1% female). At these intervals the Cuvrybrache is crowded and it is light, which might explain their presence. When it is getting dark less women visit the place: 31,0 % female between 18:00-19:00 and 31,8% between 21:00-22:00. So it might be that women feel unsafe at the site during the evening. In the interviews, some woman mentioned having an unsafe feeling, because of 'dodgy guys hanging around' (Roisin) and because of the late moment of visit. These guys hang around just next to the Cuvrybrache in a small park near the river. Several users suspect them of drug dealing. The handover is suggested to take place at the plot, their illegal activity hidden from the street view. Roisin, one of the respondents, does not visit the Cuvrybrache in the evening:

"...sometimes you've got some dodgy guys hanging around there too. Like on that concrete there, you know there. -Yeah, do you feel unsafe sometimes here? - Sometimes I don't come here at night by myself. - **Because of that?**-

Yeah, it's sort of I don't know. You are quite far away from other people, you know. It's the same thing, I don't walk through the park by myself at night. It's just, I don't do it.' (Roisin)

Roisin explains that she feels quite far away from other people. It is important for her that other people are there, in other words that it is crowded and not dark. She also says that it is not something specific for the Cuvrybrache, she would not walk through a park on her own either. The next quote from Mareike reveals again this uncomfortable feeling some women have in the evening:

"...the first time actually and there was the couple coming out and I went along along and there was a Mercedes or something a very big car and two guys who looked like. They didn't looked that serious and I actually thought: 'Well, I don't have that much time, and I don't wanna have laughs much time, because it was evening you know it was - It was dark? - No it wasn't dark, but it started. So I didn't felt that comfortable, so I thought 'okay I am coming another time, when maybe a little bit more serious people stay here'. I mean they weren't dangerous, but...' (Mareike)

Mareike mentions the same group of guys hanging around,

which gives her an uncomfortable feeling. Her story is about her first visit to the plot, because of the guys hanging around she decided to come back at another moment to further discover the place. Naturally, not all women feel unsafe because of these guys. Lisa, for instance, mentions that they are dangerous, but she is not afraid of them. She has her dog, and she mentions that her father was a boxer, so she still visits the Cuvrybrache in the evening. She just avoids contact with the guys.

Besides, women feeling uncomfortable in the evening, another explanation could be that the Cuvrybrache is more attractive for men. The atmosphere has a certain adventurous aspect to it, as it is still an illegal act to visit the place. This might appeal more to men. Without a doubt, graffiti sprayers are part of the explanation as these groups consist mostly of men. In brief, two third of the visitors are men, and this might be explained by the uncomfortable feeling women have in the evening, and the Cuvrybrache as an adventurous/illegal place being more attractive to men.

Tourists versus locals

During the observations informal users have been categorised as tourist or local, this was based on their behaviour and appearance (see Chapter 5). Objects like city maps, tour guides, tourist bikes are clear signs of tourism. Also, behaviour as having a quick look at the entrance of the place, taking a picture of the graffiti and leave again is associated with tourists. Off course, this category is harder to observe, results however provide an insight into the kind of visitors.

During the week 22,0% of the visitors are tourists, whereas in the weekend 31,5% of the visitors are tourists. Not surprisingly there is a difference between weekend and week, because Berlin is a popular destination for a city trip. And these city trips mostly take place during a long weekend. Especially, for youth the city has become a popular party location (Rapp, 2010). The influx of tourists at the Cuvrybrache may be due to its location along a 'party mile' (Lonely Planet, 2010). And because Wrangelkiez itself has become a tourist destination with its small shops and bars (Huning and Novy, 2006; Heebels, 2006). Although this all may be true, the main explanation is the mural painting from Blu which attracts people from the graffiti scene, spontaneous visitors and organised tourist tours.

Visitors seem to origin mostly from Berlin. The locals form a diverse group, consisting both of Wrangelkiez inhabitants and of youth from other districts. That two third of the visitors is local suggests that the Cuvrybrache is socio-culturally embedded within the city. Generally, locals stay longer at the Cuvrybrache in comparison to the tourists. Observation results do not show the amount of regular users. During the two weeks of observation several people were seen more often, but conclusion cannot be drawn. In conclusion, the Cuvrybrache mainly functions as a spot for locals, although the proportion of tourists is not insignificant.

7.2 Paths and projects - Movement maps

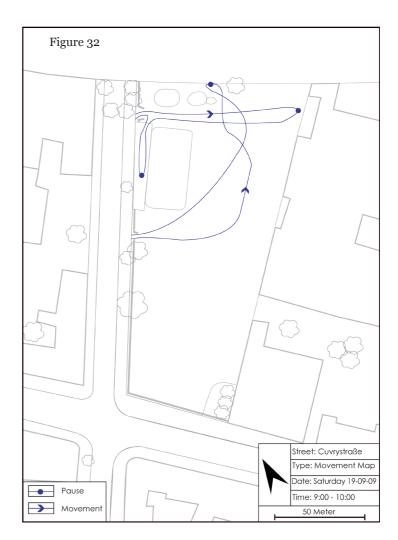
Movement maps were made to document the routes of the visitors. The maps show the routes followed by individuals and they disclose particular decision areas. Evidently, movements play a role by the construction of meaning and relate to users' projects. Chosen paths influence for example the experience of the area. After some remarks on the maps, movements of one Saturday are described to end with an overall comparison of observation results.

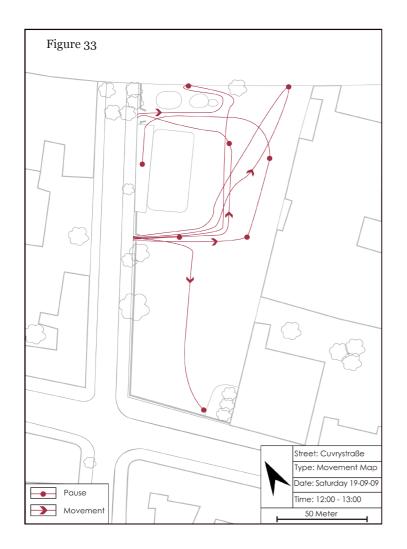
The following maps represent the Cuvrybrache and its direct surrounding. They convey that the plot has two entrances. At these spots the fence is illegally opened up by individuals, which enables a relatively easy entrance to the area. However, the accessibility differs all the time, because the land owner now and then organises that the fence is fixed. At the time of observation visitors had two possibilities to enter the area.

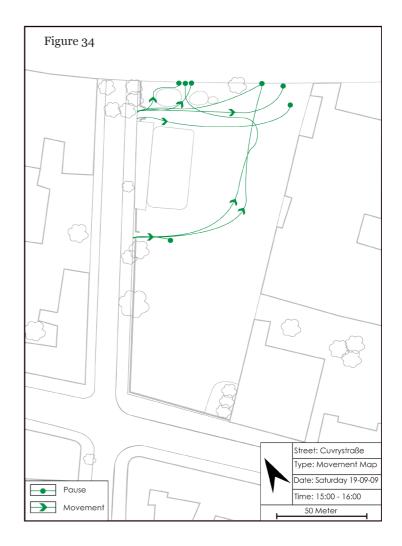
To simplify the following description names are given to them. The entrance closest to the Schlesische Stra β e carries the name: first entrance, and the other one near to the river: second entrance.

Considering the mode of transport can be said that most people enter the area by foot, some use their bicycle to reach the place of 'destination'. Quite often visitors arrived with their bicycles at the Cuvrybrache, and then got off the bicycle and walked further with their bicycle. In other words, the plot is not perfectly suited for cycling, being bumpy and full of broken glass.

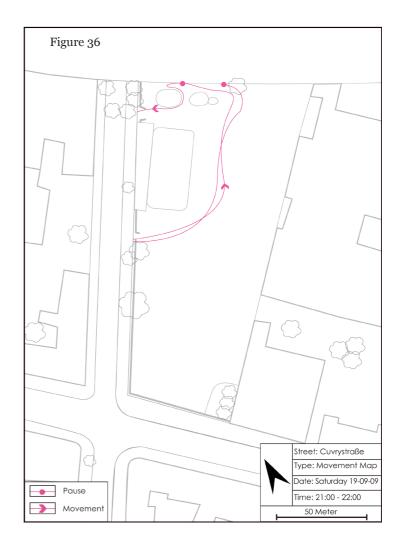
An overview of the movement maps leads to the conclusion that the main route of users starts at the first entrance and aims towards the concrete strip near the river. As will be shown by the behavioural maps this the most popular area to hang out. Before drawing more conclusions, we have a brief look at the movement maps of Saturday 19th September.











Movements - Paths at Saturday 19 September
In the morning a woman uses the first entrance, walks with her dog towards the river, sits on the concrete for some minutes and leaves again at the first entrance (Figure 32). Then, there is a guy which makes pictures of the graffiti. He enters the area at the second entrance, walks towards the long graffiti wall, and afterwards follows his route into the basement to make some close-up pictures from the graffiti's over there. Interestingly, he also uses the same 'door' to leave plot as he used to enter it.

During lunch time much more movements occur (Figure 33). Several people take the route towards the river. Yet, there is a man who turns right instead of left, and walks towards the garden with his dog. He serves as an example of all visitors with dogs. They tend to walk through the whole area with their dog, probably to give some exercise to their pet. Dog owners are as a consequence of their thorough route through the area more aware of what is going on at the Cuvrybrache. For example, each dog owner spoken to during the research period was aware of the guerrilla garden activities. In contrast to the other users, who were surprised during conversations if the existence of a guerrilla garden was mentioned.

In the afternoon the specific tourist behaviour can be seen

(Figure 34). Tourists walk on the pavement along the fence and discover the first entrance. They sneak into the plot, walk some meters and look. After this 'Kodak' moment they turn around and leave the plot. Naturally, people enter the area, and aim for the concrete strip to take a break, sit down and watch the water. The evening starts and two children run around at the plot (Figure 35). Their at first sight random movements represented by one of the lines drawn onto the map. These are lines of discovery. At the same moment an organised tourist group visits the site. Again, they enter through the first entrance, walk some metres onto to plot, a straight line towards the mural painting and proceed their tour after some minutes. Due to these typical movements, quite a lot of tourist get a 'restricted' impression of the area. Their attention is mainly drawn towards the mural paintings, leaving the river view unattended. Later on the evening less movements are observed, the Cuvrybrache slowly gets less crowded (Figure 36).

Comparison of movement maps -Routes to the river Despite small differences, the former analysis of Saturday movements represents the other days at the Cuvrybrache. Study of the other 35 movement maps did not uncover significant new movements. Only, the bottle collectors must be mentioned to complete the story. These people enter the

area, and search for bottles along the concrete strip near the river, and leave after some minutes, without sitting down for a moment. The majority of visitors have the tendency to enter the area either through the first or second entrance and then walk towards the riverside and sit down (with a moderate preference for the first entrance). The former flooded basement limits their possibilities to reach the riverside, which explains the repeating curve.

Figure 37 provides a summary of the movements at the Cuvrybrache (due to a time limit, not all the movements could be transferred to a digital document). All the individual routes represented in one map show a quite convincing pattern of use. Movements concentrate on the area near and towards the river. Visitors rather residence at the Cuvrybrache, then just past through. An *elephant path* has developed at the plot, visitors' routes leave traces on the ground. Elephant paths are unofficial routes through the city made by people although this route does not connect two places with each other) (Elephant paths, 2010). Less grass grows at the main routes, as can be seen on the satellite pictures (Figure 38). Former use thus influences paths taken by new visitors. Furthermore, do users activities (projects) influence the direction taken, as clearly shown by the description of a typical Saturday. Dog owners explore the whole area, whereas tourists only walk



some meters onto the plot. These conclusions bring us to the next section: activities performed at the Cuvrybrache.



Figure 38: Cuvrybrache Areal Photo with 'Elephant paths', 2009 Source: Berlin Senatsverwaltung – FIS-Broker, 2010

7.3 Activities and locales – behavioural maps

Figure 39 shows the wide range of activities that take place at the Cuvrybrache, it goes from hula-hooping to smoking a joint, to dreaming away while watching the river. Not to forget having a pee and riding with a motor cycle. It seems that the Cuvrybrache is open to a great diversity of activities, which are not all legal. Results from observations and interviews suggest that the place offers opportunities for illegal activities like: graffiti spraying, making bonfires, smoking grass, drug dealing and guerrilla gardening. To this list can also be added: making love and having a pee, activities which are not allowed to perform in public. Besides, these illegal activities there is an enormous list of legal activities. Each activity, however, is illegal because the Cuvrybrache is privately owned and the owner does not give permission for use. The next description of a typical Saturday (not a holiday or rainy day) based on five behavioural maps, a photo-essay and field notes gives an insight into the behaviour of users.

In the weekend: Description of behaviour on Saturday 19 September

Saturday morning, it is quiet and sunny. A little breeze can be felt near the water. Two people take pictures of the graffiti, and a woman sits on the concrete strip near the river. She drinks a coffee and looks over the water after playing with her

118

To Pee

Talk with good friend

After clubbing watch the sunrise and relax

Enjoy the sunshine

Listen to Turkish love songs, and think of your girlfriend

Make Music

Make fire

Discovering the site Tourist tour looks around

Smoke a joint

Take care of the area

Look at the Brache

Have fun with motorcycles

Have a business talk

Fishing

Swimming Making love

Drug dealing

Play Frisbee

Make phone calls

Take the dog for a walk

Playing

Repair surfboard

Hula-hoop

Sleeping

Chatting

Show it to your friends
Photographing Graffiti

Graffiti spraying

Having a party

Planet Prozess 'street art exhibition'

Watch the football championship

Youth group performance Circus

Meet friends

Grilling

Dreaming away

Reading

Listening to Children detective stories on tape

Eating Smoking a cigarette

Relax, contemplate, meditate

Speaking with you Writing

Pass by

Observe others

Enjoying the river

Chilling, hang out

Enjoying the view

Kiss

Play chess

Playing with a bal

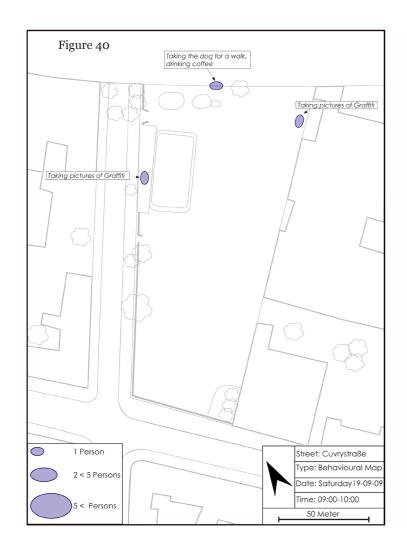
Working in the garden Drinking

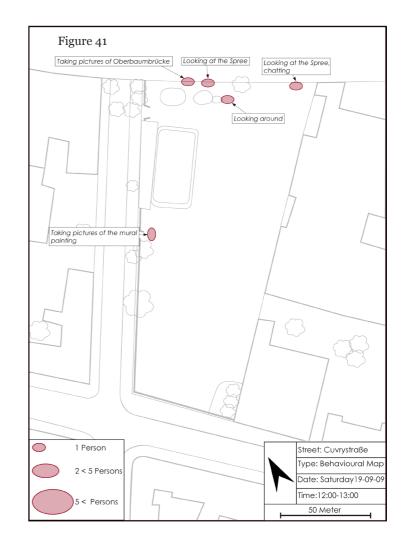
Photoshoot from an amateur band Television shooting an item

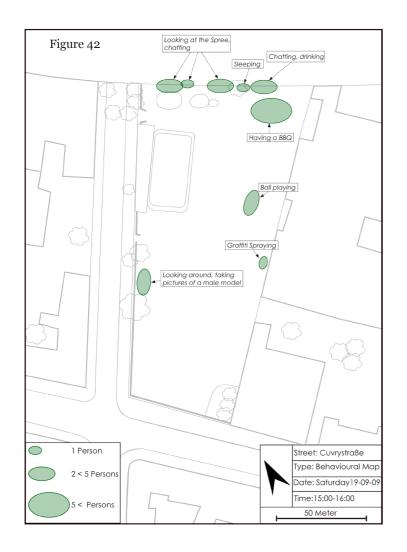
dog at the place (Figure 40). At lunch time some tourist take a quick look at the site. Standing near the first entrance they take a picture of the mural painting and leave. At the same time there is activity along the concrete strip, pictures of the Oberbaumbrücke are taken, some people sit and enjoy the river view (Figure 41). During the afternoon the Cuvrybrache is really crowded and a wide variety of activities take place (Figure 42). A photographer uses the place to make portraits of a model, together they walk around and use different backgrounds. Then, there is a teenager spraying a graffiti at the long wall. The colourful wall full of graffiti's conveys that this is a common place to spray. Just some meters next to him, a mother and her son play with a ball. Closer to the river a big group of friends hangs around on the grass. They chat, have a drink and prepare a barbecue. Meanwhile, couples sit on the concrete strip. They look at the Spree chat and have a drink. They do not pay attention to the homeless person sleeping under the tree since the beginning of the afternoon. While the evening is approaching the Cuvrybrache is still crowded, most activities take place near the river (Figure 43). Only one guy stands isolated from the rest near the Schlesische Straße. He makes a long phone call, and does not want to be disturbed. The children from the barbecue group play around. They discover the area, run an throw garbage in the holes. It looks as is if they try to grasp the area, the material setting.

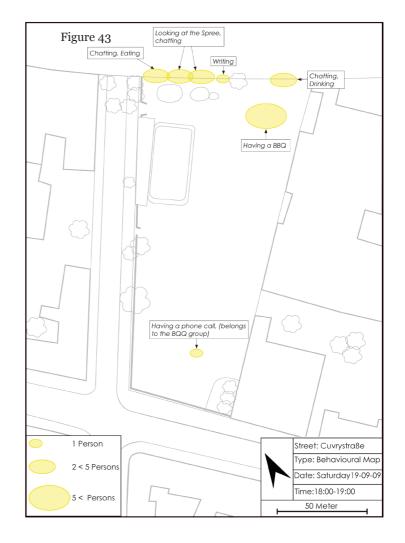
Afterwards, father plays tag with them. On the concrete strip three couples chat and drink, while one woman is writing. At night the barbecue group makes a bon fire and sits around it (Figure 44). Next to the river, another group makes a big fire. They use laminate found at the place to keep the fire going. The group consists of mainly man, one woman, a child and two dogs complete the group. This Saturday ends with couples chatting, and having a drink while looking at the Spree. They face the night.

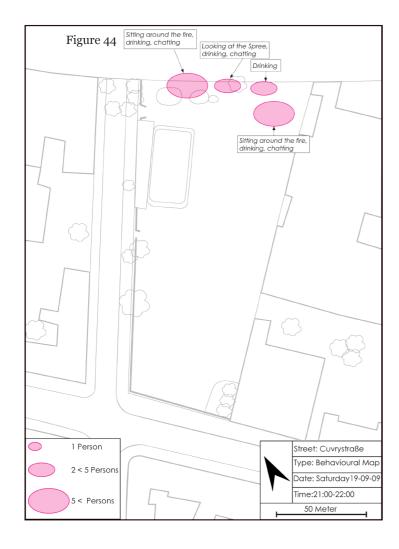
This short story of Saturday 19th September 2009 illustrates that the empty plot is mainly used near the river, the other seven days of observations confirm this. The majority of people sits on the concrete strip, looks at the Spree, chats, and has a drink. Barbecues also take place close to the river. It must be noted, however, that use might be different in the middle of summer. Several respondents told that almost the whole area was used by people, because more visitors come during this period. The behavioural map of Saturday afternoon shows that several activities coexist in the same space. These are not in conflict with each other. It is hard to draw conclusions on the existence of different locales, each locale having its own user group and behaviour. Observations seem to reveal that the ephemeral activities do not develop into claimed areas of use.











Observations

Activities september 19th











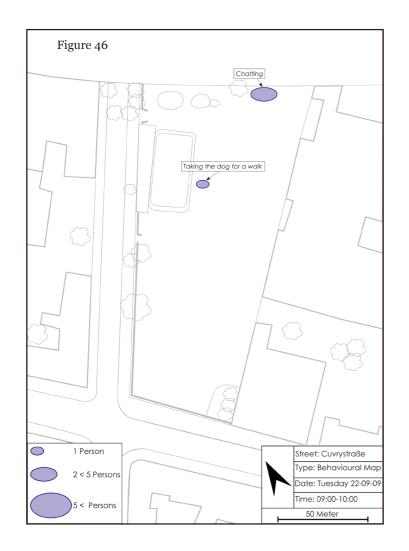


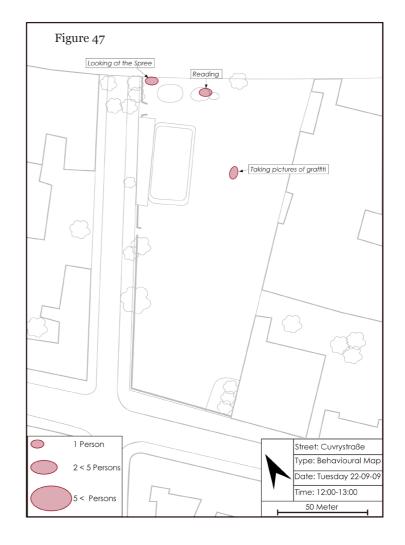
During the week: Description of behaviour on Tuesday 22 September

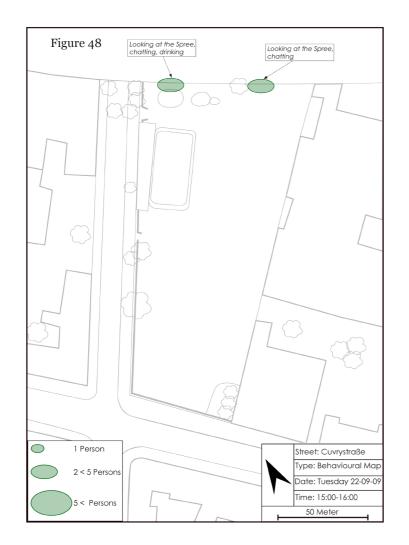
Observations at a typical Tuesday disclose new aspects of the current use, although it starts the same as Saturday: quiet and sunny. Someone takes his dog for a walk, and a man sits on the concrete strip with coffee and cigarettes, a morning ritual. A woman takes pictures of the Graffiti at lunch time. She is interested in urban art, and walks around in the 'graffiti' district Kreuzberg quite often to take pictures of graffiti. Apart from a woman reading, and a man looking over the Spree it is quiet compared to Saturday (Figure 46). In the afternoon, it is again more quiet then Saturday, only some activity near the river, whereas during the weekend the whole area was used for graffiti spraying to playing (Figure 47). Around five o clock a 'bottle collector' visits the area. These people collect bottles to earn money from the deposits. Each day they have their route through the city/neighbourhood along popular places for drinking beer. The fact that the Cuvrybrache is part of this tour suggests that it is well known place to hang out and drink beer.

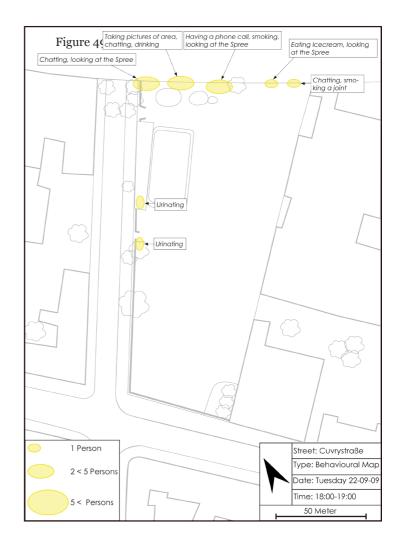
At the beginning of the evening it is crowded at the plot, especially near the river. Now, another new aspect can be seen, just next to the entrance a man urinates. Shortly afterwards another man chooses a spot next to the entrance and spends a

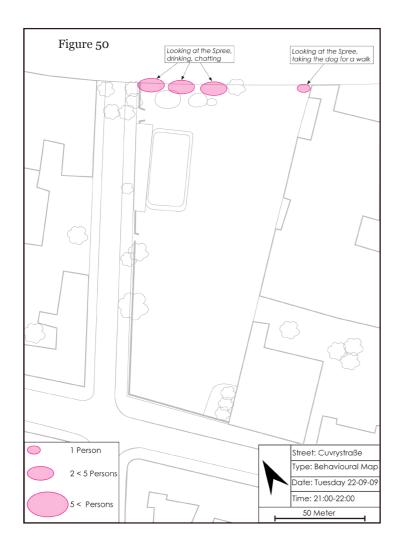
penny. The Cuvrybrache functions as a 'public toilet', specific points at the plot are used for urinating (Figure 49). Popular places are under the tree, in between the wooden fence and the wall of the former building, and a spot in the corner near the river. The man tells that they often drink beer at the Kiosk located in the Schlesische Straβe. As the kiosk does not have a toilet, they use the Cuvrybrache if they need to 'pinkel'. It is suitable for that because it is near and hidden from the street. Obviously, these spots are not used for other purposes, because they smell, and are too close to either a wall or a fence. It gets darker at the plot and people hang out near the river, no fires this evening (Figure 50).











Comparison of behavioural maps - Uncertain locales at the Cuvrybrache

The description of a typical week day shows that compared to the weekend less activities occur, which is in line with the population count results. It also puts to the front the visits of bottle collectors, and the aspect of the Cuvrybrache as a 'public toilet'. Comparison between all the observations (eight days) convey spatial practices at certain spots. Figure 51 shows the spots for specific behaviour, although it should not be interpreted as a map of fixed routines. It attempts to show the tendencies of temporary use, it is a summary of observations done in September 2009. As has been noted, the main area for sitting, relaxing, grilling and making fire is near the river, labelled on the map as *hang-out I*. Then, there are several spots suitable for graffiti: the wall, and the basement. The wooden fence does not offer good opportunities to spray, colours fade and it costs more paint. In the corner near the Schlesische Straße a garden is made and used by 'guerrilla gardeners'. Flowers and vegetables grow in little beds surrounded by stones. There are also some little beds closer to the Cuvrystraße, but this garden seems to be less organised and less used at the time of observation. People walking with their dog use the whole area. Finally, there is the spot next to the entrance where most tourists can be found. They just

stay there, look at the mural painting, take a picture and leave again. On the map another popular spot to take a picture of the mural painting is demarcated. This spot lies just next to the plot, on the corner of the Schlesische Straße and the Cuvrystraße, is used by tourists passing by. They seem to be unaware of the possibility to enter the Cuvrybrache. In addition to users of the plot itself, there is a group of men, who quite often hangs around in the little park near the river. Youngsters, mostly with a Turkish background, sit on the benches and speak with each other (hang-out II).

The behavioural maps show that even at an indeterminate space like the Cuvrybrache, a tendency of constructing difference develops. Although, it must be noted that these are uncertain tensions, which might change suddenly, because it is about temporary events. What is more, *locals* develop because of different use, not because of distinct gender or age characteristics. An example of creating a *locale* is the garden. Gardeners have chosen the corner of the plot to avoid vandalism. Henry, a guerrilla gardener, about this:

'...and is there a specific reason, yeah you didn't start the garden, why they started the garden in the corner over there?- First because it was hidden...it means from the sun as from the people. Because like I said,



many people are coming here without any idea of that we are present. When too many people are coming, there is an increased risk of vandalism. So we first thought that it would be nice not to make it like to offen. You know something you like...' (Henry)

This quote clearly shows that gardeners anticipated on the use of the plot, and started their garden in the most quiet, hidden corner of the plot to prevent any damage to the garden. The specific spots for urinating also show an anticipation on spatial practices, on the more intensive use of the river area. The fence/wall and the way the body is positioned, with their faces towards the fence, prevents that their private parts are exposed to the other users. Then, there is the cumulative use of the wall and the basement for graffiti spraying. Former paintings reinforce these sites as places for creating a graffiti piece. In this respect, it is interesting to note that the wall close to the river is more popular for sprayers. Paul, a graffiti sprayers makes this clear:

'Allein schon mal aus den Grund dass da die U-Bahn fahrt und Mann will auch hierhin ein Bild mahlen dann mit Mann dass auch von die U-Bahn sehen kann. - **Oh. Ist das auch** wichtig? - Dass ist ganz wichtig, weil die Mahler und die Writer fahren dann auch mit der U-Bahn. Die sollen sehen, die sollen hier mein Nahm sehen, die sollen mich herkönnen, die sollen mich auch kennen lernen. '(Paul)

Thus, this place is visible from the U-bahn and thereby enables that a graffiti reaches a bigger audience. People part of the scene note the emergence of new graffiti pieces during a trip with the subway (the U-bahn crosses the Oberbaumbrücke) and that makes it a popular graffiti place. In conclusion, the behavioural maps enriched with field notes reveal the actual transformation of a blank space into a meaningful place, a place open for diversity. At the Cuvrybrache uncertain temporary *locales* developed, which influence the current use.

7.4 Spatial practices at the Cuvrybrache

This chapter started with questioning how the Cuvrybrache is currently used by people. Former analysis have shown that the Cuvrybrache provides space for a wide variety of activities, from illegal to legal. Through their behaviour people have created uncertain locales. In other words, parts of the plot are claimed by certain user groups, like the guerrilla-gardeners in the corner of the plot. These claims are however fragile as it all are temporary acts that do not leave many traces. The most common user is male, between 20 and 39 years old and lives in Berlin. Strikingly, almost no children and elderly people vi-

sit the plot. More people visit the Cuvrybrache in the weekend then during the week. Mornings are usually quiet, whereas during the week it is most crowded in the evening. In the weekend the peak of visitors lies in the afternoon. Movement maps showed the tendency of people to walk towards the riverside. Tourist take an alternative path. They just move close to the first entrance of the Cuvrybrache. In contrast to dog owners, who walk around the whole area. The spatial practices of current temporary informal users of the Cuvrybrache have been clarified, their behaviour has been mapped. The next chapter seeks to identify the meanings of this place for its current users. Analysis of conversations with users will shed light on their diverse activities, perceptions, and stories.

8. The Cuvrybrache as free place

'Kinderspielplatz für Große'

,also so eine Fläche wo man sich halt austoben kann, also wo man sich, wie so ein Kinderspielplatz für Große. Du kannst halt Feuer machen, du kannst mit deinen Hunden toben, du kannst ein bisschen rum-albern, du kannst hier am Wasser sein und kannst halt etwas machen in der Stadt und musst nichts dafür bezahlen.' (Sebastian)

Sebastian perceives the Cuvrybrache as a playground for adults. The space offers opportunities to make fire, play with your dog, have fun with friends, be close to the river and do something in the city which does not cost any money. He experiences a sense of freedom at the Brache. He feels free to do whatever he wants to do. The Cuvrybrache is experienced by most users as a *free place*. It offers space for guerrilla gardening, graffiti spraying, and most importantly it functions as a place to relax in a busy city life. A sense of freedom is experienced, no rules need to be obeyed in an unstructured place. It is a social platform for meeting friends, organizing birthday parties, meeting new people **and** a place to be on your own. It is a place to let off steam, wake up, relax, chill, enjoy the river view and dream away. Calm down and find the concentration for that important telephone call you still need to make. Or

discover the wasteland and figure out the traces of the past, where did the buildings go? Some users get the feeling of being in nature. Through the big mural paintings the place even becomes an open air gallery, valued by an international graffiti scene. On top of it, the 'undiscovered' site has been added to 'alternative' tourist tours. From that moment on the Cuvrybrache turns into a space that stands for the *coolness* of Berlin. These are all meanings attached to the Cuvrybrache, the wasteland along the Spree, diverse meanings gathered from conversations with users. At the Cuvrybrache these multiple stories coexist, they live on at an empty plot in the middle of Berlin.

In this chapter, the above themes will be studied and outlined. Successive readings and interpretation of conversations with users have lead to the formulation of themes. It has been an open coding process, in which the themes emerged from the data. Throughout the whole chapter the Cuvrybrache is understood as a *free place*. All the themes relate to this main concept *free place*. It means, for instance, that *subcultures* are *in place* at the Cuvrybrache, that users experience a *sense of freedom* at a place which *lacks programming*. There are

nine subthemes, which contain different codes, all of these are enriched with quotes from the interviews. Photo-essay introduce most of the themes. In order, to give the users a voice within the research there are often quoted and paraphrased, always introduced with their (fictional) names.

The theoretical framework of activities, perceptions and stories forms the background of analysis. I have chosen not to disconnect them in different pieces of text but to speak about them in direct relation to each other. The concepts continuously interact which will be revealed throughout the chapter. For example the case of Susanne, who tells that watching the cranes at a building site always brings her and her girlfriend on new themes for conversation. Here the respondent directly shows the relation between the perception of the area and her activity. The view inspires the conversation. Hence, this chapter attempts to show the different meanings of an indeterminate space. It should represent the socio-cultural value of the Cuvrybrache. As a final remark, I have tried to be honest with respondents' stories. I hope that readers will, just like me, be overwhelmed by the diversity and richness of their stories.

Sense of freedom

'You can just go here and do whatever you want to'













8.1 Sense of freedom – 'You can just go here and do whatever you want to'

Users of the Cuvrybrache experience a sense of freedom, even so that Sebastian calls it a playground for adults. A playground is a space where children play. A space which is there to give joy to children. They run around, slide on a track, climb on instruments and hide behind threes. The playground provides, might be said, a sense of freedom to children. They are free to run around, yell and discover the environment. The Cuvrybrache does for adults what the playground for children does: it provides a space to enjoy life in a free open environment. The site is seen as a free place:

'It was always kind of a free place, where people could do what they want.' (Stefan)

It is a space open to different activities and the characteristics of the environment (river and openness) provide an 'endless experience' (Stefan). In others words, freedom is explained as the possibility to perform a wide variety of activities and as related to the perception of the environment. Mareike about the freedom of activities:

You can just go here and do whatever you want to, whate-

ver your urban thoughts of freedom whatever you want to call it, gives you to do, so yeah.' (Mareike)

Mareike does not see any restrictions on use, for her the place is open for different activities. That she says: 'you can just go there' can be interpreted as that the activities have a certain spontaneous aspect to it. There is no need to plan your activities ahead, no need for reservations or entrance fees. One just follows his own desires and goes for it. Moreover the space does not tell the user what he or she should do, this lack of programming will be discussed in more detail. The spontaneous character of the activities is also mentioned by Hannah and Tom, the 'moment' has a strong influence on what takes place. The following quote underlines the perception of the place as a 'free place':

'It has this unofficial character, just people are using it for everything they want to use it...' (Tom)

Again it is mentioned that people use it for everything they want to. Tom relates it to the unofficial character of the space, which enables according to him that people can do what they want. Unofficial means that the activities are illegal. As the Cuvrybrache is privately owned and fenced off everything that occurs at the Cuvrybrache is illegal. Henry sees a paradox in

this situation, since it is illegal to enter the area everything is possible. Henry:

'No, no but you explained that you have a different feeling when you come here, it's not programmed or something, but how is that... - Yes, the fact, actually it's really paradoxical. Well paradoxical. The fact is that's not legal. The fact that you are not allowed to come here makes the thing that neither the police nor the state or the city know what is going on here. And it's like the Berliner tradition of the squatted places. There is a bit of autonomy, self-management, self doing this. Well, so far as we are not growing cannabis, or drugs, or we are not doing this that are not against the law. Yeah I think it's really cool, that the city tolerates this kind of behaviour and allows the people to have this feeling of freedom that your behaviour is tolerated. Okay, it's not really in the law. We are not really supposed to be here, but still it is tolerated and as far as we do not harm other people we can just stay and do what we like. That really makes it so nice.' (Henry)

So Henry experiences that the unofficial character of the space offers opportunities to the users. He realises it is officially not allowed to be there and work in his guerrilla gardening, but from his experience the police does not arrest

anyone. The activities are tolerated by the city government as long as they do not engage in drug dealing or harm other people. These temporary users stand for Henry in the tradition of squatted places in Berlin, the self-autonomy.

As just shown, the Berlin police has a tolerant attitude towards the temporary use of the Cuvrybrache, as a consequence users experience a sense of freedom at the place. Several respondents noted the absence of surveillance, like Hans '... *Polizei kommt auch nie irgendwie...'* (Hans). Therefore, users feel quite certain that they will not be disturbed by the police if they have a barbecue, smoke joints, make bonfires or spray. For Stefan this secure feeling was the reason to barbecue at the Cuvrybrache:

'We come here to have a barbecue. Because this a place which is very close to the river and we can have a barbecue without getting kicked off. (Stefan)'

Also video shootings were not interrupted by the police (more about this later in the chapter), something that surprises Linda, because they probably did not receive permission of the landowner:

Jich fragʻ mich auch, wenn die Leute irgendwelche Videos drehen oder irgendwelche Sachen machen, ob sie das beantragen müssen oder man das einfach so machen kann. Keine Ahnung wie da der Status ist, das weiß ich nicht. Ich kann mir zum Beispiel auch vorstellen. Ich hab es nicht gesehen, dass Leute da verjagt werden, aber ich würde mich nicht wundern, wenn jetzt irgendwie das Ordnungsamt kommt und sagt: "Hier halt mal ab." (Linda)

Although, 'the police doesn't bother too much' (Henry) they did intervene at certain moments. Henry gives an example of a big bonfire party, which was ended by the police because the flames went to high. Furthermore, does Tom remember two guys hanging around at the Cuvrybrache for some days. They got arrested by the police and received fines. Still, police is more present at for example Gorlitzer park then at the Cuvrybrache:

,Hier kam noch nicht die Polizei, im Görli ist die ständig.' (Laura).

All in all, respondents have a sense of freedom while using the Cuvrybrache. In their perception it is a free place, because they feel free to perform a wide variety of activities in an open environment, without being disturbed by the police. What is more, the Cuvrybrache has no entrance fee. The place is *for free*. This non-commercial aspect is also appreciated by users.

Lack of programming

'It's not a park'









8.2 Lack of Programming – 'It's not a park'

On the whole respondents experience that the site does not have a clear function, something which is rare in a city. There is to speak with theoretical terms 'a lack of programming' at the Cuvrybrache, which also explains the sense of freedom experienced. Three themes indicate the lack of programming, respectively: no conceptual grab handles, an absence of fixed social routines, and the ephemeral character of the place. These are all outlined below.

8.2.1 No conceptual grab handles - 'It's got nothing to do with all of these sort of affordances of the city.'

The following quotes introduce the theme:

'There is no special meaning the community has given to this place so I think it's total freedom area. So that's why people use it for their own thoughts and experiences and kind of doings.' (Mareike)

'I mean it is not publicly owned, but the public uses it and the fact that people come here and can sit and...engage themselves in a way that is not a shop. It's not going to café. It is not buying a beer. It's not going home. It's not catching a bubes. It's got nothing to do with all of these sort of affordances of the city.' (Josie)

So Mareike has the opinion that the community, did not attach a special meaning to the site, which enables the freedom of use. Josie elaborates more on the character of the site. She lists several everyday activities, but neither of these are applicable to the Cuvrybrache. She uses the word *affordance* to make her point. During the interview she is asked to explain this term. According to Josie these affordances are 'conceptual grab handles', a metaphor that makes her ideas about the place clear. Users of the place cannot grab a handle for the interpretation of it. The place lacks fixed routines, standard activities, and or a planned function. In her words:

'Ehm... this place doesn't tell you, you have to do anything. It's just here. And...that's very relaxing.' (Josie)

She finds the absence of conceptual grab handles a relaxing aspect. The lack of programming attracts Josie, but for many people this could be a frightening aspect. It could be quite confusing for people, if they are not sure what the place is meant to be. Although this is important to note, non-users are not the focus of this research. More respondents put forward that the Cuvrybrache cannot be grasped by normal citizens' expectations:

'It's not a park.' (Jonas)

This observation of Jonas is not that surprising, obviously a park is a different environment as an empty plot along the river, but from all the *conceptual grab handles* that are in the city the park comes closest to what the Cuvrybrache is. The Cuvrybrache also has trees, grass and a place to sit. It is somehow used as a park: people come to relax, meet friends and take a walk with their dog. Therefore comparisons between an ordinary park and the Cuvrybrache may reveal the unique characteristics of the *free place*. Quite a lot of respondent spontaneously compared the Brache with a park, others were asked to speak about the differences experienced.

First of all, most respondents emphasize that a park has more visitors, in other words it is full of people. The park is as a public area accessible to everyone and is perceived as crowded on especially sunny days:

'And how does this site differ from a park, from what kind of activities you can do? - That's an interesting question, because I thought today of going to a park and a park is full. Look at this weather, there is absolutely no cloud over Berlin. It's a Sunday so everybody is free, so there are children and families and people...'(Mareike)

Particularly during the weekends public spaces are intensively used within a capital city like Berlin (where less people can afford the luxury of a garden). Görlitzer Park which is close to the Cuvrybrache is crowded with people grilling, playing Frisbee, walking with dogs and hanging around. For some people the crowdedness is not at all attractive:

'Und für mich ist das viel schöner als der Görlitzer Park. Ich hasse den Görlitzer Park, weil der ist voll mit Menschen und Hunden. Und das ist so. Wir leben in eine Großstadt und müssen in diesen Park weil wir sonst kein Bäumen sehen. Das finde ich halt doof am Görlitzer Park. Aber es ist gut, dass er da ist. Aber ich mag den nicht so, persönlich.' (Lisa)

Lisa, who pays a visit to the Cuvrybrache everyday with her dog, actually *hates* the Görlitzer park, because it is so crowded with people and dogs. She assumes that people visit the park, because they realize they are living in a big city and if they do not visit the park they will never see a tree. Lisa does not like this kind of reasoning. Nevertheless, she is glad that the Görlitzer Park exists, but she herself prefers to use the Cuvrybrache. Paul explains that the Cuvrybrache is not so crowded, because it is not so well known and it is assumed by people that it is illegal to use the Cuvrybrache. Laura and Sebastian also note that the site is not so well known:

'...Die Fläche hier ist noch ein bisschen unentdeckter, ein paar Leuten kennen den, er wird auch immer bekannter, aber es ist trotzdem noch mal... (Laura) Es ist nicht so touristisch zum Beispiel, also im Görlitzer Park kommen auch viele Touristen und...(Sebastian)'

Sebastian adds the aspect of tourists to the discussion. In his opinion the Görlitzer Park is so crowded because of tourists visiting the park. For him the Cuvrybrache is not intensively visited by tourist. He explains that he has nothing against tourists, but suggests that they create a special atmosphere at the park, which he is not in favour of. His perception of the visitors of the Cuvrybrache does not coincide with the observation results, which suggest that an increasing flow of people pays a short visit to the area (more about tourist later in this chapter). Also the quietness of the Cuvrybrache will be analysed extensively at another moment.

Secondly, the Cuvrybrache is perceived as an 'unstructured place' (Stefan). In contrast with the park which is 'put together for humans' (Josie) the Cuvrybrache is nor designed 'neither taken care' (Mareike) of by the city government. Henry makes the differences with a park quite clear. He first explains that visitors of a park are just consumers of a space, and then goes on:

'...How is this place different from a park? - Because in the park it's like, you are just like, it's a product. The city takes care of it. There are places where you are allowed to sit. There are places where you are allowed to walk. There are, I don't know, it's really systematic. It's like you see a plant and there is a little card downstairs that says the name, when it was planted and everything. It's like a museum, it's like really artificial. You don't have the choice actually, you have to consume it the way it is. (Henry)'

According to Henry a park is systematic, each area has its own function, and the plants even got little name cards. This all gives Henry an artificial feeling. His last sentence conveys that the park limits his behaviour, he has to consume it the way it is. Instead of being a passive consumer in the park, he prefers to be actively involved with the environment as he does in the guerrilla-garden (For more on this active involvement see section 8.6.3). Susanne analyses that a park is planned and built to be a park, which stands in sharp contrast with the Cuvrybrache:

'Und die Fläche ist halt für etwas ganz Anderes gedacht eigentlich. Also, dass ist halt, da hat einmal ein Haus gestanden und es hatte sozusagen ein Geschichte mehr oder weniger. Es steht quasi ein Ruine drinnen. Das macht das ganz so irgendwie interessant.' (Susanne)

The Cuvrybrache has not been planned for the temporary use that is taken place there. Remains of buildings disclose stories about former use and make the area interesting for Susanne. To this perception of Susanne can be added that most respondents describe the Cuvrybrache as empty, abandoned and huge. Especially the qualification empty (leer) has been mentioned often:

'It's empty.' (Katherina)

'Ein verlassener Platz am Wasser' (Ismael)

'Ein riesengroßes Feld, ich wird mal sagen vielleicht so groß wie zwei Fußballfelder oder vielleicht ein bisschen großer.' (Linda)

These qualifications should be seen in relation to the lack of programming of the plot. Why is the area described as empty? What means empty actually? The word *empty* implies that nothing can be found at the place, but are trees, grass, and the remains of buildings nothing? Not exactly, most respondents also describe these objects, so there must be another explanation. It probably should be seen in relation to the misfit with

the ordinary 'conceptual grab handles' of the city. In other words, the site does not refer to everyday assumptions of how a city space should look like, and therefore is qualified as empty by users.

As last remark on the differences between the Cuvrybrache and a park, a statement from Christian. He clarifies his understanding of the 'conceptual grab handle' park:

'was ist hier denn anders? - ähm beim Park gibt es Mülleimer und – äh Bänke und so' (Christian)

In short, a place cannot be a park if it does not have banks and rubbish bins. These two objects are part of the *idea* park, a lack of these hints the observer that the place is not a park. More aspects of the Cuvrybrache's aesthetics convey differences with a park. Although the Cuvrybrache has some trees, these are not located as normally and they do not have any signs which indicate the type of tree. Furthermore do plants and bushes just wildly grow at the plot. This *'randomness'* of the greenery shows for Josie that the Cuvrybrache is unstructured.

Another aspect of the lack of programming is the absence of an official name for the Cuvrybrache and the difficulties users have in naming it themselves. Half of the respondents had difficulties with naming the area:

'Is there a proper name?' (Carla) 'I doesn't have a name.' (Markus) 'There is no name.' (Stefan) 'It's nameless too.' (Nina) 'We didn't give it a name.' (Myrthe) 'A name?...that's interesting' (Mareike)

Summing up, users mostly do not have a name for the site. It is not like: 'this afternoon I visit the Görlitzer Park.' They have problems in defining the area and search for the right words to use. It proves the uncertain state of the area, the lack of programming of the Cuvrybrache. Because if the function would be clear users would answer this question more easily. The names used by users mostly referred to the location of the area: Cuvrystraße, and to the abandoned state of it: Brache (wasteland):

'Do you have a name for the site? - We just always call it...Brache, Cuvrybrache. Like Cuvrywasteland, that's how we said it. Cuvrybrache gegenüber.' (Tom)

Or people describe the location of the area as close to the river, refer to the big mural paintings, others say it is next to the well known Oberbaumbrücke. Naming a place is an instrument for people to domesticate the area, through their choice of words people attach meaning to a site. Due to a lack of programming, and diverse experiences the rest of the users gave the Cuvrybrache a diverse range of names; from 'Our garden' (Nina), 'GFA-wand' (Christian and Hans), to 'altes YAAM Gelände' (Andreas).

In brief, the Cuvrybrache is perceived by users as a place without a clear function. Comparison between the Cuvrybrache and a park conveys its lack of programming. Respondents mentioned that the Cuvrybrache: has less visitors, is unstructured, empty, abandoned and huge. It's a place where plants and trees wildly grow, which has no banks and rubbish bins. On top of it user have difficulties with naming the area. Implications of the lack of programming for social behaviour are discussed in the next section.

8.2.2 Absence of fixed social routines – 'you can't even hide behind ordering a beer'

Some respondents experience that at the Cuvrybrache it is much more unclear what people are doing. Normally a space has certain social behaviour attached to it, but this is not the case at the Cuvrybrache. Josie compares it with the situation in a bar: 'you sit down and at some point the waiter will notice you and then you have a particular kind of conversation with the waiter and you both know what the conversation is. And then they do something and you know what that is, well hopefully they do something, which is to bring you what you've ordered. And then you consume it and you pay and maybe hang around a little bit longer and then you leave (Josie)'.

At the Cuvrybrache there is no bartender and there are no standard unspoken rules of social interaction as can be experienced in a bar, because it has no official function. Josie ends her comparison with the bar with the following statement:

'but in the pub it's much more higher energy, even if it's a low-key pub. It's still a bit more up. Here it's really...yeah... you can't even hide behind ordering a beer. You are just here.' (Josie).

For Josie the site is special because it does not fill in the rules of interaction with people. She experiences interactions as more open, not fixed to certain social rules. Sebastian calls this 'nicht eingeschränkt'. There are no rules to be obeyed and every time it is different. You can decide for yourself what you will do at the site. According to Sebastian you cannot

smoke a joint, barbecue, make fire at a Beachbar. Moreover, the atmosphere does not change, each time the same people, cocktails, service and décor are there. Thus, more freedom and diversity is experienced at the Cuvrybrache by Sebastian. Tom also emphasises the absence of rules and the unstructured social interaction. He perceives a beach bar as an ordered and organised space and the Cuvrybrache as the opposite. In line with Josie and Sebastian he prefers the Cuvrybrache. Tom about a Beachbar and the Cuvrybrache:

'Someone rents it and lets you go there and then you obey the rules. And the other is just go there. You don't know really need the rules. You don't really want to sit down in an armed chair and buy a drink.' (Tom)

As has been noted the Cuvrybrache lacks fixed social routines. It does not have rules that need to be obeyed and it therefore offers a more open social interaction. This easiness that is experienced by users of the Brache is also mentioned in the upcoming section 8.5.2 social platform.

8.2.3 Ephemeral character – 'Dass man eben weiß, dass es irgendwann aufhört'

The lack of programming offers opportunities for informal spontaneous activities, but these activities must remain

temporary. Lack of programming restricts behaviour as much as it creates freedom of use. Longer term projects will not take place at the Cuvrybrache, because the landowner will not allow it. Initiatives have to deal with the uncertainty of the place. Only flexible illegal temporary interventions have a chance of success. Some respondents acknowledged the ephemeral character of the place. Josie realised for example that the Cuvrybrache is *'liable to go away like a butterfly'*, to her the place has a certain poignancy:

'...the vulnerability and the short term nature of this place makes it worth paying attention to...And not taking it for granted. I guess that's part of the poignancy. It's pointed, it's not...can't totally take it for granted' (Josie)

The fragility of the place drives her to visit it as often as possible and then enjoy little interventions as a small graffiti piece:

'It's very sweet when you first walk in somebody has written in the Kopfsteine of the road. So, they have written on the Kopfsteine that they found Oasis.'

Talking about poignancy, for Susanne the fragility makes the place attractive. She explains that the fact that it will be gone in the near future makes it more interesting to visit. Thereby she compares it to temporary bars and clubs in Berlin, which become popular very fast and disappear again. All in an attempt not to become a cliché:

'Auf jeden Fall. Ich glaube, dass ist vor allen Dingen auch so, das macht die Dinge spannend. Wenn man weiß, die sind nicht für die Dauer, dann...hält man quasi daran fest. Möchte man also mehr, also die Zeit quasi nutzen um dann dahin zu gehen. Es ist auch so mit bestimmten...Parties in Berlin oder Party Locations oder so. Die halt auch nur ein bestimmte Zeit existieren und die Leute rennen hin wie blöd und das macht die Sachen halt besonders, als wenn man... Das gibt es immer so, das gehört dazu und das ist dafür da und das spielt bestimmt auch eine Rolle. Das man eben weiß das es irgendwann aufhört und ja und dann kann man schön nostalgisch sein und sich denken: jetzt steht hier ein Haus, und damals saß ich da am Wasser, genau am der Stelle und hab schöne Gespräche geführt. Und schade!'. (Susanne)

At the end of her story Susanne leaps forward to the moment that offices will be realised at the Cuvrybrache. Then, she will regretfully look back at the times she and her girlfriend sat there and enjoyed the river view. She already likes the idea of feeling nostalgic. It reveals that she values her former experiences at places. She collects memories and cherishes them. The guerrilla-gardeners were more down to earth about the thread of construction and noted that they then have to look for other places to garden. The garden initiative already pushes the boundaries of temporality at the Cuvrybrache (see also section 8.6.3). Gardener Henry was not pessimistic about the situation, in his opinion a lost battle does not mean a lost war.

8.3 Physical structure – 'Dirty. Empty. Wild. With all the bushes. Cool.'

As part of the investigation of the interaction between visitors and physical structure, respondents were asked to describe the environment of the Cuvrybrache. Myrthe did this quite comprehensively and used only a few words: 'Dirty. Empty. Wild. With all the bushes. Cool.'. Dirt, trash, garbage it was mentioned often by respondents, therefore opinions about it and interpretations of the dirt will be outlined below. First, the hidden feeling created by the fence is discussed. To finish with the a brief analysis of wildly overgrown area. All these themes take a closer look at the perception of the environment, at the influence of the physical structure upon the experience of place. It attempts to reveal the relation between humans and objects at the Cuvrybrache.

162

Visibility and Accesibility

'You're hidden'













8.3.1 Visibility and Accessibility – 'You're hidden'

Several aspects make the Cuvrybrache a *free place* and one of the most important is the fence around the Cuvrybrache, which makes it a hidden area. The fence is made from wood, about two meters high and follows the border between the pavement and the area. It provides shelter to the users and it limits the accessibility of the place. Besides this, it also demarcates the area, it makes clear where the area ends. Linda about the visibility and accessibility of the Cuvrybrache:

'...also auf der Brache ist es schon ein bisschen privater. Dadurch, dass die halt überall zu Zäunen darum hat, und man nicht direkt darauf gucken kann und auch nicht jeder rein läuft sind eigentlich, also so halb öffentlich nur. Gehen auch nur Leute rein die das wissen das man rein kann...' (Linda)

So the fences give a more private feeling to Linda, because the area is not visible from the street and a selected group of people uses the space. The Cuvrybrache is perceived as 'hidden' (Josie, Myrthe) by users, because the fence completely limits the view on the plot for people passing by. Graffiti sprayers articulate that this protects them from unwelcome onlookers as the police. In other words, the fence enables graffiti sprayers to spray during the day without being disturbed. Graffiti sprayer Paul explains:

'Jeder in der Stadt muss aufpassen, dass man nicht erwischt wird, muss schnell sein und hier hat man Zeit sich Künstlicherisch richtig auszuleben. Noch mal was Schönes was wirklich Schönes zu machen.' (Paul)

Whereas it is dangerous to spray in the city, the fenced off Cuvrybrache creates plenty of time for sprayers to make a beautiful painting. Here must be noted, however, that the illegal activities only take place if they are tolerated or ignored by the police or private guards. Hence, a lack of surveillance enables informal use, which has been noted at the beginning of this chapter.

If the fence was made from wired steel and thereby made the plot visible to people passing by, the character and use of the place would be completely different. It could be that more people would use the plot, because they could see that there is an empty plot. On the other hand it might have as consequence that less people will use it, because their activities will suddenly be visible to others. For instance, the guerrilla gardeners will experience difficulties, because their gardens will not be hidden anymore. Besides, it will probably also be less quiet as the wood deafens the sounds of the street.

Apart from its influence on the visibility of the plot, the fence also limits the accessibility of the area. People really have to discover the plot or must be told about it by friends. They need to walk along the whole fence to find the opening. Especially tourists do not notice that they can enter the area.

Furthermore, the fence indicates that it is illegal to enter the area, so this also frightens some to enter it. Yet, in the neighbourhood Kreuzberg there is less fear to enter these privately owned abandoned areas due to its history of squatting and alternative lifestyles (Holtkamp, 2009). Tom tells us that the entrance to the Cuvrybrache continuously changes:

'And what's also interesting is the fence, as I've told you, five years ago you had to climb and to sneak around to and you were really alone. And right now, if they fix the fence it takes like one day or two days and someone ripped it of again and it's open again. So even this barrier to the...to like defence the space is changing a lot' (Tom)

This quote illustrates that the repeated opening up of the fence influenced the amount of users. More and more people came the last years, and made the Cuvrybrache more crowded. The Cuvrybrache changed from their personal place into a better known place.

Trash/Traces

'It's like a man's room, dirty and spoiled'













8.3.2 Trash/ Traces – 'it's like a man's room, dirty and spoiled'

Berlin is not the cleanest of places, yet the Cuvrybrache is even worse. Almost all respondents described the plot as dirty. During the interviews the rubbish spread over the whole area is often qualified as a negative aspect. Many made statements like it is 'dreckig und eklig' (Hannah) here, or said 'Well, it's a bit of a mess' (Róisín), which is a typical example of a British understatement. Susanne observes even that the dirt attracts flies: 'Das ist so vermüllt. Da schwärmen schon die Fliegen rum.' (Susanne). These negative qualifications of more than half of the interviewed people are not surprising, if one takes a look at the area. Specifically close to the river most of the dirt can be found, because it's the area for grilling and chilling.

Observation results show that the degree of dirt differs over time. Henry told about guerrilla gardeners, who sometimes took the initiative to clean the area. Annoyed by the amount of the dirt they spontaneously did a cleaning action. These guerrilla gardeners feel more connected to the area. They care about the state of the area, because they have their garden over there. Rightly, Henry says that the people who grill are not aware of the problem, and just leave their trash. Beside these voluntary initiatives, it's the landowner that sends four

times a year two man to clean the area. It takes about two days to collect all the rubbish. They, for example, also need to clean the cellar which contains a lot of spray cans. Thus, the dirtiness differs over time due to voluntary and controlled cleaning actions. Definitely, dirt is part of the atmosphere of the Cuvrybrache

As has been noted, the barbecue parties cause a messy atmosphere at the Cuvrybrache. In other words, the temporary activities leave their traces at the empty plot. These coals, empty beer bottles, cigarette boxes etc are signs of use. Some respondent related the rubbish with activities that took place, for them the trash was a trace of former behaviour:

'it is not very beautiful, to look around and the trash they leave. Like this here, from broken glass' (Katherina)

You find traces of civilization.- What are those traces? - The traces here you see some burned cans you know. Laughing. and like some Becks bottle...yeah tops. I don't know it's something like that. Cigarettes. Smoked cigarettes stuff like that.' (Andreas)

'Ach so, Ich sehe da die Kohlen, also die Kohlenreste von den Grillen...' (Lisa) Thus, broken glass is observed by Katherina, Andreas mentions burned cans, Becks bottles and smoked cigarettes lying around and Lisa sees coals and relates it to a barbecue that took place. The 'little signifiants' are called 'traces of civilization' by Andreas. In addition, does Hannah relates the increased dirtiness of the area with the increased popularity of the site. Again there is the relation between use and the trash found. As all that is happening at the Cuvrybrache is illegal, and temporary, the dirt is one of the few possibilities to leave traces.

Despite all the complaints about the dirt the Cuvrybrache is beloved by its users, or it may even be due to it. Quite a lot of respondents made remarks on this double feeling about the messy atmosphere:

'Though it's not the cleanest of area's. I do quite like it though.' (Róisín)

'Part of the charm that it's dirty? - Yeah, I mean it means that people are coming and have some fun here. I mean I am not saying that dirty places are nice, but it means that it's free and wild. So I like it.' (Myrthe)

Róisín represent the first group of people that likes the area

despite of its dirty character. This acceptance is something really specific for these kind of places. It is reasonable that dirt is more accepted at an empty free plot, than at a public square, a shopping centre or in front of an hospital. The second group of people sees the dirt as a sign of freedom. For Myrthe it's part of place his charm. Again there is the relation between activities and the dirt, the leftovers of fires and graffiti spraying give people the feeling that they are in a free place. The Cuvrybrache is somehow allowed to be dirty, it even must be dirty to provide a marginal, free, exclusive feeling to temporary users. It creates a 'Mad Max atmosphere' (Andreas), an urban jungle with traces of civilisation. To conclude the discussion on dirt, the traces and its acceptance an appealing quote by Jonas and Nina:

'Jonas: it's like a man's room, dirty and spoiled I don't know.
- **But you find it dirty?** - Jonas: yes. But it fits. - Nina: but Berlin is dirty too, but still we love it. Like we love the dirt. Laughing.' (Jonas and Nina)

Urban nature

'Wildly overgrown'









8.3.3 Urban nature – 'wildly overgrown'

Next point on the list of 'wild' aspects of the Cuvrybrache is the randomness of the greenery. Plants and trees were not planted by humans, seeds accidently fell of visitors clothing or were carried by the wind. Users observed that the greenery continuously changes, depending on the seasons, but more importantly on cleaning actions. The landowner organises that the plants and trees are cut each year. In order to prevent that the Cuvrybrache becomes overgrown by plants and trees, which would provide activists with reasons for saving the free place. Lisa tells about before and after the cutting action:

,Vorher war es schöner. Da waren überall so kleine Büsche, Gestrüpp war da, Blumen wuchsen, wilde Blumen. Jetzt ist alles weg.' (Lisa)

Thus, before it was more beautiful, plants and flowers grew and yet everything is gone. Also Henry remembers the change:

'I think it was one month and a half ago. Like I think the owner paid a firm to cut all the wild grass and wild things, because it was maybe like one meter fifty or sometimes two meter high. Like full of herbs, like really wild herbs.' (Henry) Again, some regret can be seen about the loss of greenery. Apparently, the Cuvrybrache was full of green, bushes with considerable heights. To the bamboo, which grows in the cellar, is often referred:

"So ganz steil nach oben, und, also großartig auf jeden Fall. Richtig, richtig hoch." (Susanne)

Susanne really liked the bamboo, but some others were happy that it was cut, because it stank and attracted flies and rats. Not everyone was content with the existing plants, Laura and Sebastian for example wished that more trees would be there, it was a bit too empty for them. Something else is the characterisation of the greenery as *wild*. Different from a park, flowers, herbs and bushes grow wildly. Linda also underlines this in her description of the area:

,Gestrüpp, so Büsche, so Gras, so Unkraut. Wilde Pflanzen halt. Es ist jetzt nicht, dass jemand gedacht hat, ich pflanz' jetzt mal 'nen Strauß Rosen oder so. Nein, 'nen Strauß Rosen pflanzt man eh nicht, ich pflanz jetzt einen schönen Baum oder so. Das ist ja eh nicht. Es wächst ja alles wild.' (Linda) According to Linda a rose bush cannot be expected at the Cuvrybrache, it all grows wildly. Mareike summarizes it nicely: 'There is nothing cultivated...' (Mareike). The presence of wildly grown trees, plants, flowers and bushes creates a certain feeling of being outdoors for users. Some qualify the area as urban nature or 'urban jungle' (Andreas). At that moment they tell about the area with wild growing plants surrounded by buildings. Markus about urban nature and waste:

'I like the way it looks. Really like trashy, kind of like an urban nature, that you have. Because the buildings around and...how it looks how the kind of it's.... it's wasted and no one cares, but it's still good everyone likes it. yeah.' (Markus)

Thus, the uncultivated area is appreciated by users, 'it feels a bit like being in the nature' (Stefan). Thereby an new meaning is attached to the wasteland, it has become a place for people to be outdoors. The Cuvrybrache becomes a place to experience urban nature.

There is, however, a tension between saying that it all wildly grows and noting cutting actions, because cutting plants is a form of cultivation. The cutting actions made the temporary users suddenly realise it is not *their* free place. It is actually owned by someone, and he or she controls it. Due to this

action an abandoned free place turns into a controlled private place. Although this feeling does not last long, temporary use keep on visiting and then leave their trash and the plants start to grow again. The Cuvrybrache is a little piece of nature within the urban context, which is appreciated by its visitors. Hang-out, relax and dream away

'Sittin' on the dock of the bay'













8.4 Hang-out, relax and dream away – 'Sittin' on the dock of the bay'

'I'm sittin' on the dock of the bay, Watching the tide roll away Ooo, I'm just sittin' on the dock of the bay Wastin' time' (Otis Redding, 1968)

Faithfully to Otis' song people are sitting at the banks of the river Spree. They are looking at the water, enjoying the sun, watching the horizon and relax, think, and dream away. In line with the lyrics of the song they sit on the remains of a small docking station, as the Cuvrybrache was a storage site supplied by boats during the Cold war (see chapter 6). Sitting on the dock of the bay is far out the main activity of the temporary users of the Cuvrybrache. Analysis of the interviews show that the importance of the river cannot be overestimated, for most of the visitors it is the main reason to come to the empty plot. They look at the water, watch the ships passing by and feel themselves for a moment somewhere else, out of their everyday city life. The Cuvrybrache is for them a free place along the river that offers space for a moment of rest in the middle of the city buzz. Different themes play a role in this respect: the activities performed, the calming effect of the river, the view, the sounds and the crowdedness. Each of these

themes are discussed here.

8.4.1 Activities next to the river – 'Really dreaming, thinking, collecting ideas...'

As the behaviour maps already have shown most of the users can be found near the river. On the strip of concrete users sit, enjoy the sun, relax and contemplate. Susanne, for example, sits, looks at the water and talks with her friend. Paul enjoys the sun that warms his back, Andreas also admits that it is a nice place to catch some sun. Then, there is the group of people that enjoys the quietness and takes the time to listen to for instance detective radio plays (Hannah), or Turkish love songs (Ismael), meditate (Lisa), let thoughts flow, or chill with friends (Paul, Christian and Hans, Henry etc.). This quote of Mareike illustrates well the experience that users have:

'So what do you here then? - I am just reading, I was eating and honestly I was just watching the river, watching the weather, watching the traffic and just doing nothing, just relaxing. Really dreaming, thinking, collecting ideas, but not forced but just like...acquit intuition. - So the view helps you to let your thoughts go around, or? - Yeah, absolutely, absolutely. I think that's the main fact of relaxing, that you just let your thoughts flow how they come and just snooze these....these the area and the ambiance and so...you

just let it come to you. So yeah.' (Mareike)

While sitting there Mareike dreams, thinks and collects ideas and she explains that the view on the river is important for that. In other words, her perception of the environment influences her behaviour. For more visitors the Cuvrybrache works like this, in the next section the importance of the river is discussed.

8.4.2 Calming effect of the river – 'and the water helps me to just calm myself down...'

All the respondents mentioned the river as an important element of the Cuvrybrache. Quite a lot of them emphasized on the calming effect of the water. They said like Paul that it has a *,beruhigende Wirkung*:

Und am vorletzten ende ist eben die Spree. Das finde ich auch ganz angenehm dass man sich hier hinsetzen kann und dann einfach die Zeit verrinnen lässt. - **Und wie fühlt sich das an, wenn du auf die Spree guckst?** - Naja... es ist einfach so eine Beruhigung. Wenn man noch gestresst war dann ist man, kann man sich hier gut. Es ist einfach angenehm.' (Paul)

Interesting is that Paul mentions that he forgets the time

when he is there. He plans to be at the Cuvrybrache for one hour and then suddenly he discovers that he has been sitting there for three hours. For Paul it is place to get rid of stress. He is just there and relaxes. The following phrase from the interview with Andreas also shows the calming effect the river has. Andreas relates it to his youth:

I am from Berlin, but...I have this I am really yeah I was lucky enough that my parents got divorced quiet early so I always got to travel twice and both of my parents liked to travel to warm places and so I basically also grew up close to the sea. Even though it were only a few weeks a year, but since I've lived...2005 I lived one year in Portugal and there I really fell in love with the Atlantic Ocean and...since then for me it's impossible to live a longer time without moving water. Yeah I just need it to level myself, because the city has so many different rhythms. I've taken them all up in to me if I am here for a longer time and I am in danger that all those rhythms rip me apart and the water helps me to just calm myself down again.' (Andreas)

Andreas really needs the river, the moving water to calm himself down. During his urban life he absorbs all the different rhythms of the city and these make him out of balance. The river helps him to get back on track again. Indirectly, and probably unconsciously Andreas refers to Lefebvre's theory on rhythms in the city. In this theory two kind of rhythms are distinguished: cyclical and linear rhythms. Cyclical rhythms originate from nature, from biological cycles in life. Linear rhythms are produced by capitalism and its emphasis on a linear understanding of time. These two rhythms continuously interact and conflict with each other (Lefebvre, 2004). Before the linear rhythms of the city become too dominant for Andreas he pays a visit to the river and absorbs the cyclical rhythms of the moving water. Not all respondents express themselves so in-depth as Andreas has done, but they all acknowledge the calming effect of the water. For instance, Lisa, who tells us that the moving water enables her to concentrate on important telephone calls:

'Ich trinke da meinen Kaffee, führe auch wichtige, manchmal richtig wichtige Telefonate, weil es ruhig ist. Weil da keine Feuerwehr vorbeifährt direkt hinter dir. Weil du dich, ich kann mich super konzentrieren, wenn ich das Wasser sehe. So diese Bewegung.' (Lisa)

Jonas and Nina also find the moving water an attractive element, and they compare it to staring at fire:

don't know. It's like staring at fire. It's like television. It's just entertaining and calming. Nina: yeah. - **Okay it's calming.** -Jonas: yeah.' (Nina and Jonas)

That this staring at water helps to calm down, and concentrate must be clear now. It, however also stimulates the conversation among people:

"Aber es ist halt schon, dann hat man Luft irgendwie. Das ist manchmal besser als in der Straße in Kaffee zu sitzen und die Autos fahren vorbei. Dann ist es angenehmer und gechillter, wenn man am Wasser sitzt und ins Freie guckt. Besser für die Konversation! Laughs.' (Susanne)

Thus, Susanne prefers the Cuvrybrache over a café to meet her friend. The open view and air stimulates the conversation. Last thing to be mentioned about the perception of the river is the influence of the airflow. For Stefan the combination of the river view and the floating air provides him with an 'endless experience' (Stefan). To add, Josie also explains that it is nice to be near the river because of the airflow. According to her, the river ventilates the city and is therefore important for the city Berlin.

'Why the water? What's attractive about it? - Jonas: I

8.4.4 Quiet place in the middle of the city – 'It's kind of like an oasis in the city'

Obviously it is not just the river that makes the Cuvrybrache a place to relax. Due to a combination of river, quietness and a small amount of visitors the Cuvrybrache is called an oasis in the city. During the interviews respondents were asked if they considered the area as quiet or noisy. Almost half of the respondents answered that the place is quiet. They enjoy 'the peace and the quietness' (Carla), acknowledge that the sounds from the street are far away if one sits near the river (Henry), and say they just mainly hear some boats passing by (Andreas).

Yet, half of the people have difficulties with defining the area as quiet. They prefer to say that 'It's quite quiet.' (Mareike), or '...it's kind of quiet' (Markus). This group of people finds that the Cuvrybrache is a quiet place for the city, but it's not like a forest: 'it's like the quiet place in the big city' (Nina). So, for them it is relatively quiet. Tom elaborates on this:

'I mean it's not really quiet you know. It's kind of like an oasis in the city somehow because you have all this concrete and the streets around and you really get the impression if you get there that's kind of a...where you really can. I don't know. How do you say this? Draw back? No....where you

can really can have. That it is a quiet place something like this, but still it's very much in the city.' (Tom)

The Cuvrybrache gives Tom the feeling that he can draw back, have a rest in the middle of the city. Thus, for city standards it is a quiet place. The perception of sounds are influenced by the view people have. Scientific tests show that people are more eager to define an area as loud if the view is full, chaotic. Josie mentions the importance of the view, to her the place is visually quiet:

'...Do you consider it here as quiet or noisy place, the sounds?

- Yeah that's interesting. I was actually thinking about the noise when I was walking through here today. I mean it is loud, because you can hear the traffic. But the on the other hand, a bird sings loudly as evidenced by our friend the bird, there is a lot off, the echo is quite long. So you...one feels. Therefore it feels like you're outdoors. Laughs. It's visually quiet...If you over by the river there is enough to look at that maybe the noise of the road doesn't impede anymore, doesn't come into your mind anymore. But I wouldn't say it is a really quiet place. No. I went to a really quiet place last week. I was in Rostock for a week and I went into the Naturschutzgebiet. Yeah. This is good for the city. Laughs. - So it's a relatively quiet place to you? - Yeah. I would

say so. Yeah.' (Josie)

Again it is mentioned that the Cuvrybrache is a quiet place for the city, it feels like outdoors, and that the view of the river has a calming effect. According to Josie the view causes that the noise of the road does not impede anymore. Besides, the view gives people the feeling of being in the middle of the city. The view summarizes the city Berlin: 'it's uniting all of Berlin' (Jonas), 'it's like really Berlin' (Henry), 'das ist so ein Klischee Panorama Berlin' (Susanne). Descriptions of the view mention the bridge (Oberbaum Brücke) which unites former East and West Berlin, the television tower, the Universal building, the river, the Treptower boys in the water, the U-bahn, and the boats passing by:

,du hast halt das Gefühl du bist mitten in einer Stadt wo gerade ganz viel passiert. Du hast da, du sitzt da, du hast das auch selber gesessen, du siehst die Brücke. Also auch so ein Symbol der Stadt. Oberbaumbrücke. Der Fernsehturm und dann kannst da in Treptow noch diese drei Männer sehen. Diese Statue und du hast das Gefühl du bist in Mitte von eine Entwicklung und es ist aber kein Mensch da.' (Lisa)

Hence, the view represents Berlin's identity and gives people sitting at the plot the feeling of being in the middle of city at a quiet 'oasis'. Lisa's last remark that no one is there partly creates the quiet place. It depends on the moment of visit if the place is experienced as quiet, because in the afternoon and evening more people are there. In the morning it is usually pretty quiet, but in the evening and at night party boats pass by, an event might take place at Universal, and grilling people can become loud. For Róisín these are all reasons to say that the area is noisy. There is also a difference between the Summer and Winter. In summertime the place is much more crowded, because of better weather and tourists. The next section discusses the solitary aspect of the Cuvrybrache.

8.4.5 The Cuvrybrache not crowded – 'Görlitzer Park wieder so voll...'

As has been noted above the crowdedness of the Cuvrybrache influences the experience of users; day and time of visit, the weather and availability of other hang outs all play a role in this. Observations results have shown that on a sunny Saturday afternoon it is crowded with people spraying, grilling and chilling. In contrast, to an early Tuesday morning where only two visitors in one hour were observed. Still, the Cuvrybrache is less crowded on a sunny Sunday afternoon than the Görlitzer Park, because an official park is better known and not illegal to visit. The quietness of the Cuvrybrache depends also on the occurrence of events at

Universal, which produce quite a lot of sound. Or party boats passing by that disturb the peace. Next, are the events taking place at the Cuvrybrache itself that can be loud:

'You had a theatre play of a school of kids. Who were like practicing, like over and over the same stupid play all of the time. It was really awful!' (Tom)

Despite these points, respondents made clear that they preferred the Cuvrybrache over the Görlitzer Park, because it is less crowded and thus more quiet:

,... und dann war die Görlitzer Park wieder so voll und dann kommt man wieder hier hin, weil man weiß hier ist es etwas ruhiger' (Sebastian)

'If you go outside, you have so many people. But here there are not.' (Hannah)

The fact that not that many people visit the Cuvrybrache is appreciated by the temporary users. It enables them to be on their own, to relax, to watch the river and talk undisturbed with friends. A solitary moment in the morning provides them with the energy for the day, about this specific aspect more in the section 'my place'.

My place vs. social platform

'Und das da ist für mich ein Schlupfloch'









8.5 My place versus Social Platform – 'Und das da ist für mich ein Schlupfloch'

It has been touched upon in the former theme the Cuvrybrache is appreciated for being less crowded as a regular park. The quietness is an important value for all visitors, but some value it more than others. There is a tension between the Cuvrybrache as a place for meeting your friends and hang out, and the Cuvrybrache as place to reflect on your life. This tension is studied in the upcoming sections. First, the solitary aspect is outlined, the Cuvrybrache as *my place*, to be followed up by the theme *social platform*. In short, in how far does the *free place* offers opportunities for either social contacts or moments of introspection?

8.5.1 My place – 'I just wanted to be calm and with myself'

Ein Schlupfloch' (Lisa)? Yes, the Cuvrybrache functions for Lisa as a shelter. She hides herself there, the same as a little mouse hides itself in the hole of a cheese. Almost each morning she pays a visit to the Cuvrybrache together with her dog. During about fifteen minutes she plays with her dog, drinks a coffee and looks at the river. This solitary visit helps her to start a day of work. During the day she will see people in her clothing shop. She needs to chat with customers, to smile and at the same moment sew new clothes. But now, she is just at the Cuvrybrache, just her and her dog, sitting wat-

ching the horizon, being at *her place*. People transform places into their places, like Lisa does. They claim an area for their own needs. This occurs at the Cuvrybrache, some of the users qualify it as *'my place'* (*Hannah*). Although, it does not mean that these users see the area as their property. They just speak out the wish to be on their own for a moment, think and not be disturbed by others:

'just being a little bit rather alone' (Tom)

'I just wanted to be calm and with myself' (Mareike):

'I like it because it is a bit solitary as well. It's a bit just me. So I can come here just to think.' (Josie)

As a consequence of this wish they try to avoid visiting the Cuvrybrache when it is crowded. During the morning and at lunch time they pay a visit at the Cuvrybrache. It has been noted already, people come to relax, just do nothing, think and dream away. The following story from Hannah illustrates the important meaning the Cuvrybrache has to her:

'So okay, and which experience do you never forget here? Like what is the most exciting experience you had at this place? - My birthday, two years ago. - Okay. - I had just one hour for myself, because my family is coming and my friends are coming in the evening. And I had just one hour and I say goodbye to my mother at the train station and I walk back here. And I think oooh, I go home at home and make food and something for the guests. No! I go just for few minutes at this place...just do nothing. For a few minutes. Laughs -Cool. So you use it really as a place to relax? - Yeah. For going out of the things that you do the whole day.' (Hannah)

At a really busy day, Hannah uses the Cuvrybrache as a place to breathe for a moment. Just for a few minute she sits near the river and 'let go out the things of the day'. In her interview she refers several times to the site as her personal space that she does not want to share with anyone else. If a friend calls and asks where she is, she just says: 'I am outside'. Therefore Hannah also has no name for the Cuvrybrache.

Susanne only shares the Cuvrybrache with her best friend. In the morning they sit and look at the river, meanwhile they have long conversations about almost everything. At these mornings they feel undisturbed and sometimes they tell secrets to each other. Susanne answering to the question if she experienced something special at the Cuvrybrache:

"....so konkret vielleicht nicht, nee. Außer das da halt Gespräche stattgefunden haben die ganze neue...Dinge an das Licht gebracht haben. So Dinge wie Geständnisse und so.'

Due to these long in-depth conversations with her girlfriend the place has become meaningful to her. In a way the Cuvrybrache means also *my place* for Susanne, she just visits it with her friend and talks, always in the morning.

Thus, the Cuvrybrache is turned into *my place* by some users, this remembers strongly off Manzo's article about meaningful places for people (see section 4.4.5). The natural setting of the Cuvrybrache affords people the opportunity for privacy, introspection and self-reflection.

8.5.2 Social platform – "Weil es halt so ein Punkt ist zum treffen..."

Besides being a place for solitary, introspective visits the Cuvrybrache is also a platform for social contacts. These different meanings conflict with each other, conveyed by the *my place* visitors who avoid the afternoon and evenings as these are more crowded. The qualification *social platform* originates from Tom, he mentioned it when he was asked to tell about what he especially liked about the place:

"...and there is a lot like social life in between there. You know like this public viewing thing over there. Just you know riding around with the motorcycles, having fun there. And just hanging out for barbecue's with friends. That's also the nice thing about the place. It's kind of a social platform, but it's not an event space. You know." (Tom)

This section outlines what the Cuvrybrache as a social platform entails. The following aspects relate to the social platform idea: meeting friends, the easiness of social contacts, and the (in) formal happenings that take place.

Meet friends

Stefan summarizes the function of the Cuvrybrache in a few words: 'just a place to meet friends' (Stefan). More respondents told about the Cuvrybrache as a place for meeting friends. Ismael and Achmed for example call it their chill place: 'Es ist jetz unser chill Platz hier.' (Ismael). They always come together with another friend and chill along the river. Andreas invites his friends to come to the Cuvrybrache for a chat, while he repairs his surfboard:

'What was the last experience at this site? What did you do then? How was the day? - It was actually the same as today. I was repairing my boards, asking friends to come by and...give me some company. Yeah, last time two of my friends brought their sons. So they were playing with their kids here, while I was repairing my boards, having a talk.' (Andreas)

Thus, people make appointments to meet each other at the Cuvrybrache, there are however also spontaneous contacts between visitors. Laura and Sebastian for instance, just know that some friends of them will be there. For their group of friends the Cuvrybrache has become a popular hang-out place:

"Man kann sich mit vielen Freunden hier treffen, weil viele Leuten hier herkommen. Weil es halt so ein Punkt ist zum Treffen. Also, es ist so zu sagen ein Punkt wo viele Freunde wissen, dass man da auch mal vorbei gehen kann und die Wahrscheinlichkeit ist groß das jemand da ist. So wie in Görlitzer Park. - Ja? - Du weißt einfach wenn ich dadurch laufe treff ich jemand.' (Laura and Sebastian)

Hence, Laura and Sebastian feel quite sure they will meet a friend if they visit the Cuvrybrache.

Easiness

Until now, it has been about meeting people you know, but

according to some users the Cuvrybrache has a certain atmosphere that encourages loose contact between strangers. Carla called this *'easiness'*. She likes the fact that a person comes over to her and just speaks with her (in this case it was the interviewer). This theme relates to the already noted absence of fixed social routines (see section 8.2.2). Josie about the social interaction at the Cuvrybrache:

'It lets you have a particular kind of experience and a particular kind of social interaction that...is totally open and based solely on your ability to negotiate with people.' (Josie)

Paul also tells that it's easy to get in contact with people one does not know:

,Und eigentlich kann man auch relativ leicht wenn die richtige Leute da sind schon mit jemand reden oder so...,(Paul)

Paul, as an illustration of what can lead to these new contacts, received an assignment for spraying a graffiti piece on some firm's van. Lisa even accidently met a woman, who has become a good friend of her now:

"Und es ist auch ein schöne Geschichte weißt du. Jetzt ist sie eine liebe Freundin von mir. Wir haben uns damals auch kennen gelernt. Und weil wir uns da zufällig getroffen haben und dann hab ich sie gefragt. Ich hatte eine Modeshow und dann kam sie in Laden und dann hab ich die einfach spontan gefragt ob sie mitmachen will bei der Modeshow. Und sie hat gesagt: "Ja klar". Und so haben wir uns kennengelernt. So richtig nah auch kennengelernt und jetzt lebt sie dann wieder in New York." (Lisa)

Undeniably, spontaneous contacts take place at the Cuvrybrache, it is of course the question in how far this differs from other public spaces within the city. Yet, for some users the Cuvrybrache is meaningful, because of these social contacts.

(In)formal Happenings

In addition to offering opportunities for meeting friends and strangers the Cuvrybrache offers space for (in) formal happenings. Actually, most happenings are informal, because the landowner does not give permission for most temporary projects. According to Tom, the land owner is not really interested in realizing temporary project since it demands a lot of work without the prospect of earning money. Moreover, it is politically really difficult.

Diverse happenings take place, to list some: a short-film

screening, birthday parties, watching the world football championship, an urban art festival, a YAAM party, a Circus, an youth theatre piece, an electro party, and after parties. These happenings differ in scale and character. The circus had an agreement with the landowner, and the youth theatre piece also probably had permission. All the other happenings were informal. Some experiences are told here by the respondents. Stefan remembers visiting an electro party ten years ago:

'I just know there were many cool people hanging out, maybe two hundred over the whole area. They were all sitting somewhere, there was some installation going on. Yeah it was just. It was cool.' (Stefan)

At that time more was possible according to Stefan, other examples of big parties were not mentioned by respondents. Meanwhile, respondents recalled small birthday parties, mostly including having a barbecue. Andreas, for instance, organised his birthday celebration at the Cuvrybrache. Lisa remembers a birthday of one of her friends. This friend brought tables, lamps and a barbecue onto the plot and invited some people. Watching the World Championship is another example of people gathering:

Yeah, sometimes, as we are close here, with our electricity.

We put there TV's some couches and just some lamps and built something like a living room over there to watch the championship in France.' (Tom)

Furthermore, spontaneous after parties take place once in a while. Laura and Sebastian enthusiastically tell about visiting a big music festival called *Fusion*, and afterwards all their friends went to the Cuvrybrache. They did not arrange it, all came on their own initiative to the Cuvrybrache. It was special night for them, with sleeping bags, live music, and the last drinks of the night/morning:

"...also wir waren auf einem Festival mit ganze vielen Leuten. Also das ist, Fusion heißt das ist in der Nähe von Berlin ziemlich groß. Und wir sind dann am Abend zusammen zurück gefahren und andere kamen früher oder später oder so. Und es war dann aber doch so, dass dann alle irgendwie die Idee hatten, nach der Fusion mit dem Schlafsack hierher zu kommen, eben, und sich hinzulegen und ein bisschen Musik zu machen und zu grillen und was weiß ich noch, dann haben sich quasi Alle sich hier wieder getroffen von der Fusion die Leute, obwohl es nicht abgesprochen war. Es war halt so, als hätten sich alle so gesagt: Ach ja, ich wollte zum Gucken ans Wasser so.' (Sebastian)

Through all these happenings the character of the empty plot changes continuously. These diverse activities create new meanings. The circus, led to some surprises among visitors, Linda recalls suddenly seeing a Lama:

Also, letzte Woche war sehr lustig mit dem Circus dort aufgebaut hat, und dann lief auf einmal ein Lama über die Fläche...'(Linda)

Apart from a Lama also cows and Shetland ponies walked upon the plot, something that Linda enjoyed. From her desk Linda has a clean view upon the plot, the circus therefore broke into her daily routine at the office. It caused a short moment of joy during work time. Rehearsals of a youth group for a music-theatre-dance piece also disrupted the concentration at the office. Although, this time all were annoyed by the repeating drums and yelling of the youths. Tom was also annoyed (who has his office at the other side of the Cuvrybrache):

'You had a theatre play of a school of kids. Who were like practicing, like over and over the same stupid piece all the time. It was really awful! I was sitting here in the office and they were playing the same the same cheap rhythm all the time.' (Tom)

Without a doubt, not all the happenings are appreciated by users, but conflicts are inherent to urban spaces. In conclusion, it can be said that the Cuvrybrache functions as a social platform. Friends meet, strangers spontaneously get to know each other and a wide variety of happenings take place. Equally relevant to the social platform function is the space it offers for the graffiti subculture and the guerrilla gardeners, which will be explained later in this chapter. Final remark on *my place* versus *social platform* must be that although these two stand in conflict to each other, people manage to let these meanings co-exist within the space. Mornings are there to be on your own, and evenings are reserved for meeting friends, these meanings coexist between users and within users.

8.6 Space for Subcultures – 'It's like a wild gallery'

The Cuvrybrache provides space for subcultures, which means that graffiti-sprayers find a podium to spray, meet and look at other pieces, guerrilla-gardeners can grow their vegetables and meet each other, and that it also functions as a background for photos-hoots, video-clips and performances. It seems that subcultures flourish at the Cuvrybrache. Graffiti, guerrilla-garden and photo-shoot are all discussed below.

Graffiti

'Yeah, It's colourfull'













8.6.1 Graffiti – 'Yeah, it's colourful'

'It's colourful' says Andreas about the Cuvrybrache, with that statement he refers to the walls full of graffiti. The place would look completely different without the graffiti, it partly defines the area. Roughly speaking two kinds of graffiti can be seen. First, the mural paintings of the well-known artist Blu, the one with the two figures ripping of their masks painted on the backside of a warehouse and the other painting can be found on the next building. It is a business man whose hands are chained by Rolexes. Second are the continuously renewed paintings on the long wall, and on the remains of the basement (Map of Uncertain Locales, see Figure 51 for locations). Graffiti-sprayers visit the Cuvrybrache often. They hang-out with friends and paint at the site. It seems that graffiti is *in place* at the Cuvrybrache, the next section explains why it is an attractive place for graffiti sprayers.

Attractive Graffiti place

Quite a lot of graffiti-spraying occurs illegally. Buildings, bridges, walls, lamp posts, they all serve as 'linen' for the sprayers, something not always appreciated by the owners of these objects. To put it mildly: opinions about graffiti differ. Some hate it others love it. Within the city Berlin there is a special taskforce active to tackle graffiti 'vandalism'. If sprayers repeatedly get caught they risk imprisonment This is the case

for graffiti sprayer Christian: "wenn ich nochmal erwischt werde dann komm ich in Knast' (Christian). Although, or maybe due to, its illegality graffiti spraying takes place across whole Berlin and quite frequently at the Cuvrybrache. Several aspects make the Cuvrybrache attractive to sprayers. First of all, the presence of suitable physical structures for spraying upon. Respectively, the basement and the long wall as mentioned before.

Secondly, the risk to get caught is quite low at the Cuvrybrache due to lack of surveillance, the hidden environment and the tolerant attitude of other users and the neighbours. Paul about the absence of police enforcements:

,Das man hier einfach, so mitten in der Stadt, und eigentlich so mitten mitten...ja...mitten so in der Sicherheit. In der Sicherheit der Polizei wie sie es auch machen, mitten am Tag so etwas machen kann. Normalerweise kann man nur nachts etwas machen und so...nachts...und richtig spät. Aber hier kann man auch tags etwas machen und das ist..., (Paul).

Normally, spraying is only more or less safe in the middle of the night, but at the Cuvrybrache you could spray during the day. That users feel hidden from the street has been analysed before in this chapter. Lastly, the tolerant attitude of other users and the neighbours provides the graffiti sprayers with quite a safe feeling to perform their street art. Graffiti sprayer Christian describes the reactions of other users on their behaviour as follows:

'unterschiedlich, also voll unterschiedlich, manche Leute kommen auf einen zu und fragen einen wie man das macht und so - manche Leute meckern rum, warum dann wieso meckern? - ja gibt so Leute, aber hier eigentlich nicht, aber an anderen, also hier sind die Leute immer ganz nett eigentlich - ja? - die gucken einfach zu oder, also wie gesagt die würden nie die Polizei rufen oder so, glaub ich... und nicht mal die Leute die da wohnen. - ja? - die sind schon daran gewöhnt.' (Christian)

This quote makes clear that other users mostly accept graffiti-spraying and the neighbours are used to it. Christian does not expect them to call the police. Graffiti-sprayers trust and have the experience that it is safe to perform their beloved spraying. However, one must not push the matter too far as observed by Tom. He tells the story of some guys that got arrested by the police and got bad sentences too. This happened after they stayed for several days at the Cuvrybrache, Tom about it:

'It was their fault as well, because they stole some letters and they were really hanging out there for six or seven days. I don't know for a couple of days and building some sheds there and...so the people from the other building really felt like pissed off and they called the police. '(Tom)

Thus, basically it is no problem to spray, but sprayers have bad luck or push it too far.

Thirdly, the Cuvrybrache is experienced as an attractive place to spray, because it is located close to the graffiti shop Overkill. It only takes some minutes to walk to the shop, which sells an extensive collection of graffiti cans. If a sprayer needs one more can to finish his piece of work, he can easily buy the needed paint at Overkill. In the view of Christian and Hans the shop has changed. At the beginning it was a small shop just for buying cans and now it is: '...ziemlich in der Szene oben drinne...' (Hans). The shop has expanded, also clothing, shoes and other *stuff* is sold now. All products are related to the 'urban' scene, and origin mostly from brands. These brands sell their 'exclusive' products in *Overkill*. For Christian and Hans this change is an example of how Kreuzberg has changed. They do not appreciate it:alles ist sauteuer irgendwie und da kommen halt auch die ganzen aus Prenzlberg und weiß nicht, was die da so ... Ich hab halt gar nicht das Geld' (Christian). These two youngsters complain about their changing neighbourhood, and feelings of displacement that go along with it.

Back to the attractiveness of the Cuvrybrache, which is revealed by the ongoing renewal of paintings at the walls. According to Christian and Hans a piece only lasts for three to four days at the place. Linda, who just hangs out at the Cuvrybrache, no spraying involved, observed that the walls look different every week . Yet, Paul appreciates the Cuvrybrache for the fact that it ensures him that his work will be longer visible to the public, in comparison to an official spray place. All in all opinions differ, but without a doubt the place is intensively used by the graffiti scene.

This brings us to the last point, the place is well-known within the Berlin graffiti scene. This raises the chances to meet other sprayers and it also makes your work visible to the whole scene. A piece will be noted by others, as many sprayers make use of the place. Moreover, if one paints at the wall close to the water, his or her work is visible to all U-bahn travellers. This visibility to commuters is a main argument for sprayers to do a piece at the Cuvrybrache. The presence of the scene is especially for beginners exciting. They are able to see and get in contact with more famous graffiti sprayers. The

Cuvrybrache provides opportunities for spontaneous exchange of ideas, signatures and tags. More about the value for the scene in the next section.

Scene value

For reasons explained above, graffiti sprayers consider the Cuvrybrache as a good place to spray. It has developed into a place of considerable value for the graffiti scene, revealed by the spontaneous contacts that are made, the appearance of the Berlin-famous graffiti crew GFA and its relation to graffiti events. Young graffiti sprayer Paul about getting in contact with other sprayers:

,Was war das letze Mal, als du hier war? Wie war das? Was hast du getan?- Für mich war das sehr schön, weil da unten eine Wand. Siehste die. Points towards the wall near the pool. Da war einer von Berlins Szene gewesen ein Maler. Und der ist relativ bekannt und ich hab mich mit dem unterhalten und der hat mir der Skizze in mein Zeichenbuch rein gemacht. Dass war für mir einfach angenehm gewesen, weil ich war dann hier noch die ganze Tag gewesen. Und hab ich mit dem unterhalten und da waren auch noch anderen da gewesen. Dass war sehr schön gewesen, also ich bin eigentlich nur gekommen weil...naja... ich wollte hier ein Bild malen aber ich bin da nicht richtig zu gekommen.

Wie heißt dein Graffiti Name? - Mein Graffiti Nahmen ist SUB2. - Und der andere Mann? - GRAB. Also dieser Platz ist auch wichtig, um andere Leute kennen zu

lernen? -

Ja schon. (Paul)

Next, most graffiti sprayers belong to a *crew*. This is a group of friends that hang out together, barbecue and have a drink besides the collective graffiti actions. They discuss other graffiti works and plan new actions. For Christian and Hans their group *o3o* (named after the Berlin's area code) is like friends, family: '...wie normale Freunde. Was man halt auch mit den normalen leute macht, Familie...' (Christian and Hans). Crews may succeed in getting well-known within the city. The GFA crew has been active in Berlin since the eighties and receives respect from other graffiti sprayers for their achievements. At the Cuvrybrache a piece of GFA remains untouched by others, which is a matter of respect. Several respondents have referred to a now disappeared big piece that the GFA crew did at the basement. Josie remembers:

You see a bit further down. It says GFA. This is a...stands for...the something like the graffiti five artists or something like that GFA. They did a piece. There is some down there where the cellar used to be where I saw the orchids. There is that wall. And they did quite a large piece that stretched cross two of those little walls. And they said: 'GFA artists 25 years going strong. So they obviously started when they

were like 14 and they are still going strong.' (Josie)

GFA has clearly had some impact within Berlin's graffiti scene. Christian and Hans relate this piece and the *crew* to the Cuvrybrache. They even name the place after it: 'Ja wir nennen es immer GFA-Wand...' (Christian and Hans).

The city Berlin has become well-known for its street art (Stacey, 2010). During the summer the beach bar YAAM organizes an international graffiti festival called *Graffiti Box* Jam. From all over the world artists visit the festival. It is a celebration of street culture. Visitors spray graffiti, criticise each other work, break dancers perform and hip hop music is played. According to Paul, Christian and Hans this is a major happening each year and visitor of this festival often also pay a visit to the Cuvrybrache. These international visitor spray something at the walls and hang around. Another street art event that took place at the Cuvrybrache was *Planet Prozess*. During the event light projections were made onto the walls. At a so called *tag tool session* artists paint on a sensitive patch, these drawings are directly beamed upon the wall. Different artists tag their works temporary on the wall. In conclusion, Berlin graffiti scene values the Cuvrybrache as a place to spray, meet and see the work of others.

8.6.2 Blu mural paintings

International well known graffiti artist Blu has made two mural paintings at the Cuvrybrache. These two paintings strongly define the area and have consequences for its use. It has for example attracted tourists to the site. In box 3 more is told about the making of these mural paintings. As this research focuses on the concepts activities, perceptions and stories it is relevant to study users' interpretations of the mural paintings from Blu. During their activities at the Cuvrybrache their perception of the area is influenced by the two huge mural paintings. Furthermore, representations of Blu's work led to moments of recognition by visitors and made the area more popular.

Interpretations of the Mural Paintings

Users react on the big mural paintings and on the other graffiti. Obviously, some are more interested than others in the subject, but all of them are forced to have a look at the two images as they are of an impressive nature. It is worthwhile to have a look at how users interpret these big mural paintings, because this chapter tries to capture meanings attached to the Cuvrybrache. Their interpretations differ, but also show similarities. Moreover, some respondents related the paintings directly to the characteristics of the place and its wider context. Stefan states: 'I really like the big graffiti's here. It is

Box 3 Making off the BluMural Paintings

The art association Artitude, located next to the Cuvrybrache, took the initiative for the big mural paintings of the Italian artist Blu. Tom, who is part of Artititude, directed the whole process and his story is told here. It all started with the exhibition *Planet Prozess:*

'two and a half years ago we had this big exhibition in the whole building 'Planet Prozess' which, you know, the concept and idea was having an exhibition which focuses on the city, so it's kind of a street art exhibition, but I don't like the term street art because there is so much, I don't know, junk and stuff in there. But basically the idea was to have an exhibition which focuses again rather on the connection between the inner space outer space. The art in the city and to make it a process.'

He invited several artists for Planet Prozess including the French artist JR who often works with big photo posters on walls and the Italian artist Blu who is famous for big murals. After some brainstorming these two artists decided to cooperate together on a piece. Tom about the process:

"...and so he [JR] decided to paste the eyes, to put it one in the right position and one upside down. So they would be like, happy eyes and sad eyes. Just because they are turned and the rest was up to BLU. And then he decided also to paint the characters. So one from above and one from here, and he always...paints it's really amazing. He always has some ending. He paints for like sometimes for seven days and then he adds like, everybody is already gone, and he adds one detail which totally changes the meaning or whatever. So he did this in Sao Paolo, for example, he painted weapons,

and weapons, and weapons just like a huge huge big pile of fire arms. Everybody was like four days: 'What are you painting?'. He said: 'No, I just like it'. And then you know, right at the opening of the show he painted...in the top of the pile, just on the peak this Jesus. This Jesus who is in Rio, and then it totally was an amazing work. Or he did this in NY right now. Painting a big machine and then right before his flight went he painted dollars in there. I don't know, so it totally changed. And...yeah he painted these two guys from upside down with the masks and then finally added. Or what I was surprised about. The hands, and he put like this East side West side signs. And I thought it was really funny. I am not sure if he was aware of that. His phones rings, he talks shortly on the phone. So I really was surprised, because I am not sure if he was aware of the border situation here, the history of the building and also like the gang history of this area.'

Tom organised that Blu could do the painting. He asked IVG's daughter company Wert Konzept for permission to enter the plot, which he got. This enabled them to put up the crane for painting the piece. In addition a contract was signed with the owner of the building, which secured that the owner is not responsible for maintenance of the piece of art. Tom also agreed with the company that it is a free work of art:

'We can talk about sketches, but it's not like a commercial work. It's an artistic work and...which also makes very clear that the owner is not allowed to paint to alter it anyhow. So because it would be very easy, just to pay someone to paint in a coca-cola sign or a Macdonald's or whatever and it's branded.'

So the permissions were received, and the crane hired. JR started with pasting the eyes at the wall. They origin from:

'JR pasted it his eyes...just thought about what to paste, and it was clear he couldn't paste the whole wall. So he thought about pasting the eyes, because he had these eyes this was what he kept from another picture he took from a boy. And the mother just did not want him to use the picture, not to have it, so he just kept the eyes of this boy.'

After that Blu finished the piece in a day and a night. Then it was presented at the exhibition:

"...and then finally we had, off course we painted the wall and for the opening we had people here and we had a. We did a time-lap video of this, like a little bit surveillance camera style. And so we kind of connected the inside and the outside in this very easy way to have the wall outside of the show and then inside of the show we have like a time-laps of the production. Yeah. like a surveillance camera. And that's how we did the big thing."

This video has been put on YouTube and got a lot of views (see Table 8). After a year the posters of JR got off the wall due to rain and wind. Tom spoke to Blu and they decided to renovate the piece. During the preparations for the renovation the idea came up to do another piece at the other building:

'The second one, as I said was a very spontaneous action. Blu and I, we were just like let's do something next year paint or whatever. Okay, I would like to come to Berlin. So I said okay, I will try to

get the money to paint the other one over or just to refurbish it. That's what he wanted to do. And then he came here and everything was really spontaneous. It was like okay, we can do the other wall as well. And then we focused rather on the second wall. I mean it was November. It was pretty cold and misty, which really sucked. Because for the other one it was no problem to work on it for twenty four hours, because it was...you had light till ten pm. It was pretty warm at night still and he had. It sucked a little bit, but I don't know. He did in two, three or four days. He had this sketch which he wanted to do and I liked and yeah we did it pretty fast.'

This time it was more easy to organise the permissions. They even succeeded in getting a small fund from Wrangelkiez Quartiersmanagement for the paint and the crane. Tom about the different reactions on the mural paintings:

'And basically for the first piece it was really a lot of paperwork, getting the permissions and we got no money for doing it. And for the second wall it was one and a half year later, and then it was like three phone calls and everybody was like: 'o yeah, paint our wall! Great. So this like perception of street art changed really a lot within one and a half years.'

Thus, the idea for a second mural painting was received with enthusiasm. Tom recalls the intentions of Blu, and thinks about possible meanings:

'This is really obvious. One thing he wanted to go bigger. Of course. If you watch it it is really. It's again it's bigger than the

other two. The other two seem quite small. This is a real bombing, you know. It's really huge. It's really shrinking all the walls. You look like, if you are in front of it, I don't know, see how big it basically is. And...yeah he had this idea of this golden Rolex chain. He wanted to do. I think he decided the last minute to make it a business man. Or not in the last minute, but before he had something else, but then he decided to do the tie as well. And...I think most interpretations are pretty close to. One way to read it is off course like the guy chained by time, and the other is chained by...his golden watches. So by wealth and working for it. And it's like, what I found really funny, when I took some pictures from the roof of Universal. It's a...I really enjoy, people sitting in their offices looking at this picture.'

Tom also sees Blu's work out of his office. Each working day he enjoys the view.

kind of identity making.', and thereby makes clear that these paintings directly influence the identity of the place.

To begin with the interpretations of the first made mural painting; the two figures that rip of each other's masks and make certain signs with their hands. Quite a few of the respondents interpret the sign of the hands as East and West. They see this as a reference to the once divided Berlin. They link the image with the location of the Cuvrybrache, just next

to the former boundary. Susanne, about the image and the Oberbaumbrücke:

,Vielleicht ist das eine Anspielung auf die Berliner Gesichte wahrscheinlich, oder? Weil die Oberbaumbrücke war auch ein besondere Grenzübergang. Von Ost nach West, also Kreuzberg. Bis zur Oberbaumbrücke ist Westberlin gewesen, die Brücke an sich war Grenzübergang nach Osten. Also, die Spree hat quasi an der Stelle, und auch an der Stelle wo der Platz ist Berlin geteilt. Also von daher ist das ein gute Stelle.' (Susanne)

For Tom the hands also refer to the history of Berlin, but not just the East West division. It reminds him also of the former youth gangs in Kreuzberg, respectively the 'infamous 36 boys' and the '...Arrago boys. I don't know. It indeed, it wasn't like the South Bronx but... was gang like.'. In brief, Blu's mural paintings hints onto the specific history of the Cuvrybrache and its direct environment.

Interpretations, however, are not consistent with each other. They are actually quite diverse. For example Lisa, to her the turned up eyes represent Big Brother is watching you:

"Und mein allererster Gedanke war tatsächlich: "Big Brother

is watching you, das war wirklich mein allererste Gedanke. Also dieses, du wirst überall beobachtet'. Glaub nicht, glaub nicht, dass wir dich nicht sehen, aber wir zeigen dir nicht wie wir aussehen. Weißt du? Weil es so vermummt mehr oder weniger, wie so ein Käppi auch und dann nur die Augen. Ich find es total super.' (Lisa)

Then, Andreas thinks that the two figures have an argument with each other and relates it to the East-West conflict. Christian and Hans also suggest that the figures have an argument and therefore rip of the masks of each other to see who the other person is. Instead of having an argument Sebastian interprets the mural painting as a statement for showing your face to the other. He wishes that people will not hide for each other, but be open to each other. Sebastian, then relates it to the Cuvrybrache:

,also ich find das Zweite, zum Beispiel, zeigt vielleicht auch: 'Zeig' dein Gesicht'. Das sind halt zwei Leute hinter der Maske und jeweils der andere reiβt dem anderen die Maske runter. Dass man sich man halt offenbart und nicht immer alles versteckt macht und dass man sich halt dieses Beobachtung und hinten raus holt. Hier macht keiner was. Wir können hier ein Feuer machen ohne, dass jemand die Polizei ruft. Wir sind hier. Wir sind oft hier. Wir zeigen uns. Wir rennen nicht wie Vermummte rum und genau so kommen auch nicht die Nachbarn auf die Idee, uns irgendwie hinterrücks anzuschnauzen. Wenn irgendwer wirklich ein Problem damit hätte, würde er, glaube ich, eher hierher kommen und sagen: 'macht mal nicht so laut' als dass er wirklich sofort die Polizei ruft. Weil er auch weiß, was das hier einfach für ein Kulturtreff ist.' (Sebastian)

According to Sebastian, the mural painting coincides with the attitude of the users of the Cuvrybrache. In particular, people are themselves and are open about their behaviour. They show their faces, and as a consequence they are respected by others. Sebastian therefore does not expect neighbours to call the police if users are too loud, instead they directly contact the users.

On the whole interpretations of the second mural painting, the business main chained by his watches, are a bit more unambiguous. In fact, it seems to be a quite straightforward message. Respondents mention things like: 'chained by time' (Jonas) and:

'It's a...I mean the Rolex is a status symbol of the yeah of the western capitalist way of organising and...time is something...many people have to sell. And even people who have lots of money most of the time have a lack of time and this is what symbolises this picture to me. You can sell all your time and get lots of money and get really stressed out about it and but you will be handcuffed by it. You know. You are getting handcuffed by time and to me it's really important to have money, but it is also nice to have some time. You know. Laughs. Just to live a relaxed life somehow.' (Andreas)

For respondents the painting mostly symbolises criticism on capitalism, a system which according to them stimulates the craving for wealth and results in stressed out employees. People as the painted business man lack time and have become slaves of the system. Laura underlines this as well, and sees a link with the Cuvrybrache:

...bei diesen Schlipsträgern ist es halt eben so, sie sind an die Zeit gebunden, sind Sklaven der Zeit und können sich eigentlich nicht mehr befreien so und hier ist immer ein Sinnbild, das uns wieder daran erinnert, Denn hier kannst Du irgendwie doch frei sein. - Also das Bild macht dir bewusst was du hier machen kannst? - Naja, zum Teil auch weil es halt ja hier hängt und auch hier entstanden ist. So es hat schon etwas mit dem Ort zu tun, aber eben darüber hin aus auch ja...hat es auch ein andere Bedeutung. (Laura)

Due to the painting Laura becomes aware of the freedom experienced at the Cuvrybrache. In contrast to the business man users of the Cuvrybrache have a moment for themselves, a moment to relax.

To summarize, the two mural paintings cone the area. Respondents associate the first painting with the former East-West division in Berlin. They make connections between the painting and the location of the place. Obviously interpretations differ a lot, as for instance the faces are experienced by someone as big brothers who watch everyone. Less discussion exists about the second picture, most users associate it with a person who lacks time because of his restless seek for money. He is, in other words, imprisoned by the capitalistic system. Again, some respondents make the connection between the picture and the place. Laura finds that the painting makes her aware of the freedom experienced at the Cuvrybrache, in contrast to the Rolex businessman. Lastly, it must be noted that almost every respondent was enthusiastic about the mural paintings. Their existence is much appreciated by the users of the Cuvrybrache.

Representations of BLU's work in the media '...and then put it on YouTube, and within one month we had like three hundred thousands hits and it was like spreading, like crazy.' (Tom)

The above quote shows the fast and widespread impact that the graffiti piece had. Since the first mural painting has been made it has appeared in newspapers, magazines and street art books (Figure 52 and Figure 53) (Galimberti, 2009). For instance, the New York Times published an article about graffiti in Berlin and made note of the Cuvrybrache and its mural paintings of Blu (New York Times, 2008). Furthermore, the videos made by the artist have got an enormous amount of viewers online (see Table 8). Then, also Lonely Planet hints tourists to pay a visit to the mural painting of Blu as part of their 'radical Kreuzberg tour' (Lonely Planet, 2010).

Figure 52: Postcard of clothing shop Killerbeast

Source: Killerbeast, 2009

Figure 53: Shelve at independent book shop in Wrangelkiez

Source: van Duppen, 2009





Respondents are aware of the well-known status of the mural paintings:

'Inzwischen gibt es ganz viel Bücher, Bildbande, wie man kaufen kann, und wo auch alles drinnen ist.' (Hannah)

Through this wide-spread media coverage the mural painting with the two figures has become 'iconic' (Tom). This has several consequences, which are outlined below.

Table 8 Views of Youtube video's B

Video	Views	Date video uploaded	Date mural made
Blu + JR in Berlin (2 masked faces)	281,211	2 July 2008	July 2007
Blu in Berlin November 2008 (business man)	740,593	25 November 2008	November 2008

Source: Blu animations and other videos - notblu's Channel at Youtube -, 2010

First, of all new users got to know the mural paintings before they have even walked onto the area. Thus, they have memories about reading a newspaper article or seeing it in a street art book and with these memories they walk onto the plot. Their perception of the area has been influenced by the consumed images of the mural paintings. Markus saw the pictures for example in a club party magazine:

'I saw it first in a magazine. I guess. I know it was anywhere here, but I saw it in a magazine and yeah. that's where I recognized it.' (Markus)

Like Markus visitors may have feelings of recognition during their visit of the Cuvrybrache. For a lot of tourists the mural paintings are the main reason to explore the place. These tourists saw images or the YouTube video and this triggered them to visit the site. To see the images itself. For instance, Carla who saw the YouTube video at home in Italy. During a random bike trip through Berlin she saw the mural painting from the Oberbaumbrücke. She decided to have a closer look:

Tve seen video's from the making-of. So I said, okay just take a look nearer. - **So you saw videos of the graffiti? -** I've seen Blu making it, on YouTube and stuff like that.' (Carla)

Yet, the wide-coverage within the media also might have as consequence that the surrounding neighbourhood gentrifies. Tom fears the increasing popularity of Wrangelkiez, on which the mural painting has its influence:

'We don't really have...there is not like any outcome, like any concrete profits we have from it. But at the same time the whole area gets more fancy, you know, rents are rising. You have more like cafes, people come because of the vibrant creative scene and yeah the result will be that someday, I hope still it will last some time. But basically we have to go, because of our own work.' (Tom)

Although his fears are understandable, it is really hard to figure out if the mural paintings have influence on gentrification process, and if so how much influence then? One could say, using the words of Ley that the artist Blu has turned junk (the big empty wall) into art (the mural painting) and the next step in the process would then be gentrification, including the displacement of former inhabitants (Ley, 2003). There is however no solid basis for this analysis. Meanwhile, nor Artitude or Blu received any money for the creation of the mural paintings, Tom therefore suggests:

If we had like one euro for every picture taken here, also from the tourists. We could paint it over like every tree months. It's like always, if you just go like to the Schlesische Straße at this corner there is always someone taking a picture of it. (Tom)

Open air gallery

The title of this text about space for subculture already noted the characterisation of the area as 'a wild gallery' (Mareike), more respondents used these kind of words, take for example Andreas: 'yeah, for me it's like an art gallery' (Andreas). Former analysis have shown that the Cuvrybrache is not just the site of the Blu mural paintings but also an attractive place for the Berlin graffiti scene. Using the vocabulary of the art world, the Cuvrybrache has become a collectively used atelier for street artists. At the walls almost every day new graffiti's appear made by local and international sprayers. It reveals that the Cuvrybrache has considerable value for the Berlin graffiti scene. Graffiti sprayers activities directly influence users' experience of the area. Users appreciate the wide variety of graffiti and criticise the works, some nice pieces were remembered by respondents although they were gone for long. Especially, the works of Blu have their effect on the perception of the area and its surroundings as shown by the analysis of the interpretations of Blu's work. Finally, representations of Blu's work in the media made the place more well-known, now it attracts more visitors and it has influenced the experience of the area.

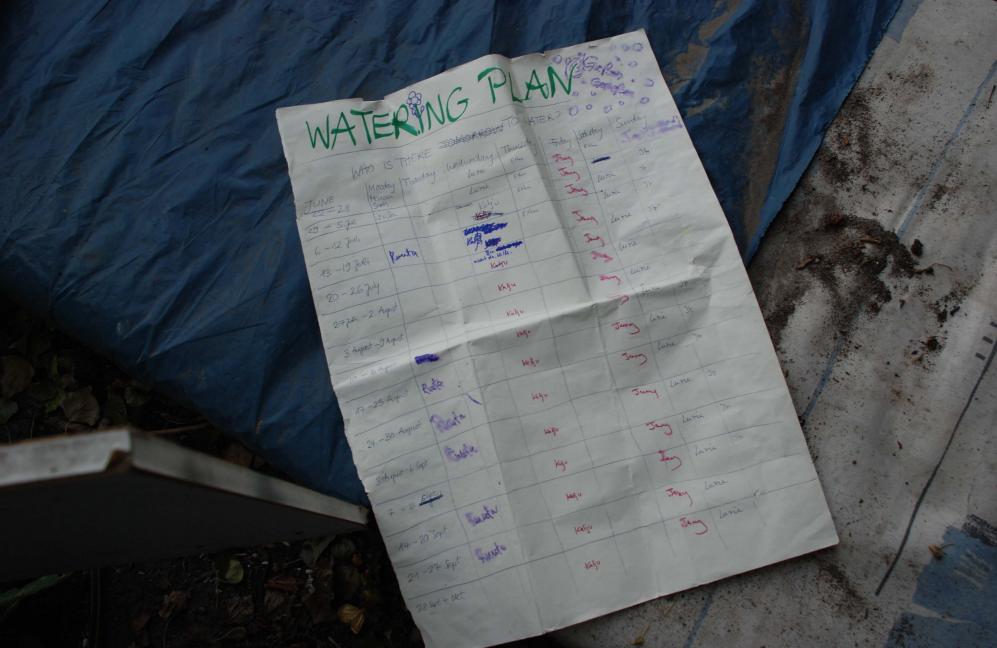
Guerilla garden

'We call it either secret garden or guerilla garden or Spreegarden'













8.6.3 Guerrilla Garden – 'We called it either 'secret garden' or 'guerrilla garden' or 'Spree garden'

The former chapter already mentioned the existence of a guerrilla garden at the plot. Figure 51 showed the uncertain locales and one of these locales is the garden. People have turned a blank space into their garden. A small group of guerrilla gardeners grow their vegetables and meet each other. We get in contact with the gardeners, to find out about their motives, see who initiated the project, get a better understanding of the social network and last but not least analyse the reactions of other users on the garden. Based upon conversations with Henry and Róisín an insight is given into the guerrilla garden subculture at the Cuvrybrache. They lived both in Berlin at the time of the interviews. Henry, a Frenchmen, has been active in the garden almost from the beginning on. Then, there is Róisín, a British woman, who did not belong to core of the group but also participated with her tomatoes plants.

The initiative Spree Garten

Berlin, spring 2009, two Finnish girls start the Spree Garden project. They had the idea for a little garden at the empty plot near the Cuvrystraße, so they looked for other participants. To spread the message they made a little note and hung it on lampposts and houses in Wrangelkiez. Lisa remembers the little handwritten note: ,*Es war ein Zettel an den*

What is the Spree Garden?



Many of us were inspired by the idea of "Guerrilla Gardening", which has been around at least 25 years. In many cities, people have taken empty lots, often without permission, and worked together to plant trees, grow food, build playgrounds for children, and otherwise reclaim their city. Guerrilla Gardening is about building a city you want to live in, rather than just complaining about the politicians and businessmen.

Our garden on the Spree is significant for a few reasons. It is a large empty lot, included in the plans for the MediaSpree restructuring of the neighborhood. By using it, we are showing that MediaSpree is not the only one with plans for this city. Also, in this time of Peak Oil and rising food prices, growing local organic food makes a statement about sustainability and about a greener city. And the gardening skills we learn while doing it may well come in handy in the future.



We are collecting donations to buy some tools (shovels, wheelbarrow), compost, and seeds. Donations in kind are also welcome; do you have any spare tools, benches, or a grill?

If you want to join in, just come down to Cuvrystraße any Sunday between 1-5pm. There will be a larger "work party" the afternoon of May 10th with some food as well.

You can also reach us on the internet at spreegarten@gmx.de or $\parbox{http://spreegarten.blogspot.com}.$

Figure 54: Flyer of Spree Garten, 2009

Source: Spree Garten, 2009

Hauswänden, Habt ihr Lust, bei einem ökologischen Garten hier an der Cuvrystraße mitzumachen? (Lisa). They might have got inspiration from other guerrilla-garden groups in foreign countries, or from the ones in Berlin. Within the last decade a world-wide guerrilla garden movement has developed, with online networks, and even a handbook (Reynolds, 2008 and Guerillagardening.org). In Berlin, the most well-known and active group is Rosa Rosa (online article). It is uncertain if the girls were aware of former gardens created at the Cuvrybrache. Probably they found out later. According to Henry there was a similar project two or three years, this was abandoned in 2009.

As can be read in the little flyer of the Spree garden it was the idea to realise a garden for vegetables (Figure 54). Not just for the sake of having a garden, but also as a protest against the building plans. Vegetables and flowers as instruments against the 'threat' of new offices, lofts and hotel. In addition, to the flyer a blog was made to encourage exchange of ideas about gardening and function as a platform for contacts between gardeners. This website has, however, not been actively used, only several posts can be found without much comments (Spree Garten, 2009).

Both Henry and Róisín participated after a friend told them

about the garden. On his first day Henry '...just grabbed some tools and had some seeds and tried it like that. It's like the way most people tried...' (Henry). Róisín went together with a friend to the Cuvrybrache, her tomato plants transported with the bicycle. She started like this: 'you just pick a patch, clear all the weed and then make a little border with stones.' (Róisín). So through social networks gardeners become aware of the garden and then decide to participate.

Motives for gardening differ. Henry, looked for alternatives things to do besides his internship in Berlin. His balcony was too small for plants: 'I wanted to have my own plants on the balcony, but because it's too small. Well, when I heard about it I thought that's the perfect way to have my plants and vegetables.' (Henry). The shortage of space was also an argument for Róisín: 'Well, if you live in a flat. I'm from Manchester and I've got a garden and I've got plants in the garden. I've got potatoes, beans and lots of different vegetables in the garden at home. In Berlin I don't even have a balcony. I've got no outer space and I think the allotments, I think, they're very strict.' (Róisín). Thus, Róisín searched for a space to grow her own vegetables. She used to do that back home in Britain. Besides, she also thought it would be a good opportunity to meet new people. This, however, did not work out as she expected it to be.

Róisín and Henry enjoined working in the garden, for them it was a way to escape from their office work. It made them feel relaxed. Róisín underlines the value of working with her hands and being outside:

'It's quite funny. I enjoy clearing the weeds and things.- **So you do something with your hands?-** Yeah and I like it, I work in an office. I sit there in front of the computer and tuteh tuteh and then it's nice to and also it such a good weather in the summer. It's nice to get out and do things.' (Róisín)

After working in the garden one can eat one's self-grown vegetables, something much appreciated by both respondents. Henry, was asked to tell about a nice experience at the Cuvrybrache, then he told the following:

'The first one is when we came with some bread and mozzarella. We directly ate some tomatoes, like cherry tomatoes from the plants with basil that was also growing up there. Like eating raw like this. That was like a really nice feeling, like you could produce something. If you want, with a little bit of effort you can really enjoy your proper things. It was a really nice thing.' (Henry)

All in all, personal motives seem to be dominant to start

gardening activities. It appeared after a while to Henry that the gardening had political meaning and from that moment on he supported it. He spoke quite passionately about creative attempts with symbolic meaning, like the fence they replaced into the garden, in order to let it be overgrown by plants. As a consequence people could easier access the Cuvrybrache and the fence was used for growing plants. Another thing was the re-use of old computer screens and mattresses as objects for growing plants and flowers. For Róisín, however the political meaning of the gardening did not play a role.

It is important to note that the guerrilla-gardening activities do not mainly encompass gardening, it has also to do with meeting friends, having barbecue together, exchanging jokes and just relaxing. Henry has a vivid memory of sleeping at *their* guerrilla-garden. It gave him a feeling of being in nature, although he realised that he was in the middle of the city:

Yeah the second experience I had was sleeping here at night. You feel like on the, like Russians would say on the Datscha. Like on the backcountry in the little house with the little garden and you feel like you are in the nature. You see the Spree close to it, water and plants and trees. You feel like you are outside the city and when you wake up two minutes from here you have the Schlesische Tor. There you can take

a coffee and you are back to civilization. It's like really nice the contrast of wilderness and back to civilization to the city urbanism after.' (Henry)

Loose network of gardeners

The group guerrilla-gardeners consists of different nationalities, besides German people also Finnish, French, British, and Argentinean participate. This is not that surprising, as Berlin is home to a mix of nationalities. From the conversations with the gardeners can be concluded that they form a loose network. In other words, gardeners spontaneously participate, meetings do not take place regularly and not everyone knows each other. According to Henry around thirty people planted something, fifteen of them knew each other and from these fifteen people six or seven were really active. This core organized the money, food and other things. Róisín experiences confirm this. In the beginning she tried to contact the other gardeners but here attempts failed. Moreover she was not aware of the 'water plan', which Henry and the others made to ensure that the plants got enough water in the summer.

Interestingly, despite the loose networks gardeners had a kind of community feeling. They cared for each other's plants, watered them, repaired sticks etc. The Spree Garden was not perceived by respondents as their private garden, but as a collective garden. Henry formulates it as follows:

'It's not like your garden, it's not like, because you share it with other people, so there is a community spirit you have to share the tools. You have to take care of the plants of the others.' (Henry).

Tools are shared, gardeners help each other with transporting the water from the river to the garden (with bike trailer and massive water barrow) and sometimes Róisín discovered that her tomatoes were eaten already:

'I've brought some string though. The other people in the other garden, they tie up, they look after yours. Like when we got to water, we water all the other plants as well. So other people got thick in to our plants and we brought string and tied up other people's plants. - Ah okay, so you care for each other? - Yeah. They also eat your tomatoes a little bit. Someone eats them too. I don't really mind.' (Róisín)

Managing uncertainty

It is not a coincidence that the term *guerrilla-gardening* is applicable to the activities at the Cuvrybrache, because it is an illegal garden. The land-owner did not provide permission to realise a garden at his propriety. Thus, the gardeners

had to manage the uncertainty of their activities. A garden needs time to grow, to develop, in contrast to other activities like having a barbecue, or graffiti spraying. The Finnish girls therefore contacted the landowner in spring 2009. They pretended to be interested in renting an apartment, which had a view onto the Cuvrybrache. During the phone-call they asked how long they will keep the view on the river. In other words, when will the building start? The landowner said that they it will not start before next year. This ensured them of having a garden at least for one season.

The gardeners' activities were rightly qualified by Josie as 'low-key interferences' because they did not made a giant path, or pushed all the plants into one corner strictly divided from the gravel. The garden remained small, and little plots were improvised with stones and soil. In chapter 7 Henry already explained that the location of the garden, tucked away in the corner of the plot, was chosen consciously. This diminished the chances on vandalism, another tactic to manage the uncertainty of the garden. Lastly, the core of the gardeners had a discussion about the storage of the tools and the wheelbarrow. Some suggested to lock them, to prevent it from robbery. Instead, the group decided to leave them unlocked, free for use for everyone. It means that they wanted to trust the other users, and enable spontaneous gardeners to use the

tools. This worked for almost three months, then the wheel-barrow was stolen. Henry attributes it to the increased popularity of the Cuvrybrache.

Reactions of other users

It has been noted already, the majority of users of the Cuvrybrache is not aware of the existence of a guerrilla-garden. The following quotes illustrate the unawareness:

'Have you heard of the guerrilla gardening activities? - The what!?' (Andreas)

'Und weißt du von diese Guerilla Garten? - Guerilla Garten?- Weißt du davon? - Nee.' (Sebastian)

If noticed by other visitors reactions were mostly positive. Some were so enthusiastic that they decided to participate or help them. Henry describes the reactions on their gardening activities:

'Most of the times they just ignored us, because they don't see us. So they just think we are chilling around there. It was, especially before, it was really hidden. So like most of the people who know the area just came here to the border of the Spree. To do what they usually do, like drink a beer talk

a bit. Have a chat, sometimes have a barbecue and then go away. And the visitors who had no idea, like some tourists or some people who are just curious, like the neighbours most of the time they were really amazed that you could do such a thing. Just like me, they didn't have the idea before. Yeah, it was more admiration, surprise and most of the times support. Like: 'o that's nice, good idea'. I didn't have so many spontaneous visitors so to say.' (Henry)

In summary, the Cuvrybrache is valued as a place for gardening. For Roisin and Henry it gives satisfaction to work in their illegally created garden and to eat their self-grown vegetables. *Spree Garten* is a political statement against the Neue Spreespeicher plans, but it is even more a place to relax after a day at the office and to enjoy the taste of fresh tomatoes. A loose network with feelings of community lasted only during 2009, at the moment (May 2010) no new garden activities are observed. Notwithstanding, did the Cuvrybrache provide space to the *subculture* guerrilla-gardening. The next section sketches the last alternative activity which take place at the Cuvrybrache.

Theatre for photoshoots

'Letztens wurde auch ein Musikvideo gedreht'













8.6.4 Theatre for photo-shoots – ,...letztens wurde auch ein Musikvideo gedreht'

There is another aspect to be added to the collection of meanings of the Cuvrybrache, that is its function as a theatre for photo-shoots. Although not specifically a subculture, it is relevant to be mentioned in this section, because it is an alternative activity which often takes place. Both amateurs and professionals choose the Cuvrybrache as the place to locate their video/photo shoot. During the observation period quite a lot of shoots were noted (as the photo-essay showed already). The Cuvrybrache serves as a background for video clips, for photo-shoot with models and many more. One example is given by Lisa. She used the Cuvrybrache as location for a photo-shoot for her clothing shop. The pictures will be published on her new website:

,Und meine Internetseite Killerbeast.de die ist dann auch der nachts mit der Brache abgebildet. Also die Fotos die wir gemacht haben mit den Model.' (Lisa)

Due to a combination of factors the Cuvrybrache is attractive for a photo-shoot. First of all, the place is not that crowded, thus chances for disturbance are lower. Second, the hidden character provides shelter for 'experiments', and there is no need for asking permission. Third, the background consisting of the mural paintings, the graffiti, the wildly grown plants and the openness of the plot provide an appealing setting for photo-shoots. Apparently some people favour the Cuvrybrache for a shoot, maybe because they want to suggest to be in touch with the 'underground'. They might want to be associated with a kind of rough urban feeling. Linda describes the recording of a music video a the Cuvrybrache:

"Wie jetzt die Zirkus oder wie diese Ausführung, oder letztens würde auch ein Musikvideo gedreht. Da waren sie richtig mit Kamerateams da und die Band war auch wieder schräg, und da waren viele Leute und der Sänger war komplett, also alle waren angezogen. Der Sanger auch, so komplett mit Hut und Jacken, Schuhe aber keine Hosen und keine Unterhosen, also waren unter um quasi nackt. Laughing.' (Linda)

Later during the conversation Linda explains that such a music video would be more difficult to record at Görlitzer park, because that park is crowded. Recording four man running around without underwear could cause trouble at such a public space. The Cuvrybrache seems to be more suitable for such a video shoot. The actors are also visible to others, but not for the masses. At the office of Linda, they yell 'Freakshow' if such a thing as above happens at the plot.



Figure 55: Relocating Home: Berlin #1(Umsiedeln: Berlin #1), 2009 Digitaler C-Print, 76,2x114,3 cm – *Digital C-print*, 30"x45" Source: Reznikov, 2009

Literally, the Cuvrybrache becomes a theatre with the employees of the office as spectators.

Other respondents also referred to shootings that took place at the Cuvrybrache, Tom mentions the shootings of a band and Susanne remembers actors being recorded at the place. Lisa refers to a shooting of the visual artist Asya Reznikov, who she met at the Cuvrybrache. Reznikov included the Cuvrybrache in her series *Moving Home* (Figure 55). She recreated her former New York City apartment from Berlin postcards and photographed it in various locations in Berlin. One of these locations is the Cuvrybrache, the somehow footloose Reznikov about the idea of her series: 'while the model attempts to fit into its surroundings, it conspicuously originates from an entirely different location' (Reznikov, 2009).

In conclusion, these different photo-shoots transform the place into a background of videos and photos. Through these shootings the Cuvrybrache becomes a theatre. A theatre suitable for a wide range of stories to be told, be it from amateurs or professionals.

On the whole the above themes have shown that the Cuvrybrache provides space to several subcultures, in particular graffiti spraying and guerrilla-gardening. On top of it, it functions as a theatre for photo shoots, which is something different as tourists taking pictures. Briefly said these illegal alternative activities are *in place* at the *free place*. The Cuvrybrache seems to belong to the *underground* infrastructure of Berlin, which might make it *sexy* to tourists. About the attractiveness of the Cuvrybrache for tourists and their experiences at the plot handles the next section.

Tourists

'Just like gaping at the wall'









8.6.5 Tourists – 'just like gaping at the wall'

Tourists visit the Cuvrybrache, their behaviour and presence have been described in chapter 7. Most tourist either take a picture of the Blu mural painting from the street corner, or walk onto the plot for some metres, look around within this area, take a picture and leave. Roughly speaking three kinds of tourists visit the Cuvrybrache: visitors of Wrangelkiez who accidently drop by, visitors that have heard/read/saw about the Blu mural painting in the media or in their tourist guide and the last group consists of participants of organised tours. At this point an analysis of an organised tour illustrates the experience of tourists and the meaning the place has to them. It seems that their experiences focus on the mural paintings of Blu. They are purely onlookers, but more will be revealed in this section.

Due to time-constraints no interviews were done with tourists, therefore is this story based upon an extensive conversation with tour-guide Stacey Anderson. For this research it is relevant to study what the tour guide tells to the tourists and their reaction upon it. In other words, here is an attempt to sketch the context of the touristic experience. As the tour-guide has done many tours to the place, she is also able to characterise their behaviour at the site, and how it for example differs from their behaviour at other places. Stacey works for

the small tourist company *Alternative Berlin*, which organise tours that show *'less conventional sites'* in Berlin (Alternative Berlin, 2010). She has a sociological background and has lived in different urban settings (NY and Buenos Aires). She includes her knowledge and experiences into the tour.

The tour attempts to visit: 'the more authentic tourists spots, if there is such a thing. It's like a contradiction.' (Anderson, 2010). The Alternative Tour Berlin starts at Alexanderplatz and goes to places like East Side Gallery, Tacheles, RAW-Temple, and the squat Thomas Weissbecker Haus. Stacey included the Cuvrybrache into the tour while: 'it would allow me to talk about like the street art phenomena in Berlin and how the Graffiti movement kind of started in Kreuzberg' (Anderson, 2010). She calls it the 'anti-gentrification' tour while they visit places that have an uncertain future, whether they are auctioned off or sold. The company Alternative Berlin targets the 'younger travelling demographic', who mostly get in touch with the tours through 'word of mouth' (Anderson, 2010).

After attending several 'alternative' places the group of tourists is led to the Cuvrybrache. They walk from the U-bahn station Schlesische Straße towards the site. While approaching people start to take pictures of the graffiti from the

corner of the Cuvrystraße, Schlesische Straße. The tour-guide insists to walk on, because soon they will have a better view. The guide tells to the group that they will 'trespass', she does this to give the group a certain 'thrill'. It is all done to give them an 'exclusive feeling', to provide the 'real insider' experience. At the time of the conversation with Stacey the Cuvrybrache was totally covered with snow, according to her it was even more shocking to see this 'huge expansive area of snow in like the middle of the city' (Anderson, 2010). Therefore Stacey offers the tourists the opportunity to 'digest it for a second'. She describes the first reactions of the tourist on the place as follows: '…just like gaping at the wall. They are really like, just with their mouths open.' (Anderson, 2010). Thus, tourist feel impressed by the view of the mural paintings and the huge open area.

Then, she starts her story about the mural paintings of Blu and goes on telling about street-art versus vandalism, graffiti as part of Berlins identity, Blu as an artist and his work, the informal use of the space, and the conflict of interest between the temporary users and the Media Spree real estate-developers. Stacey, for instance, underlines the uniqueness of the tolerated informal use. She tells about the bonfires, and the reactions of authorities to it: 'There is this unofficial acknowledgement between the city and the neighbourhood.'

(Anderson, 2010). On the whole, a quite comprehensive story is presented to the tourists.

Before the tour goes on tourists have same time to take pictures and walk around. If tourists take pictures, they mainly focus on the graffiti or try to capture the graffiti and the space within one image. Tourists also do not walk far into the space, in Stacey words: *'They kind of stay at bay, as if it were like kind of sacred.'* (Anderson, 2010). Her observations coincide with the observations results of this research (see chapter 7). Two aspect explain their behaviour. First, they are part of an organised tour. Second, they do not feel any entitlement to the space. Stacey about the last aspect:

'So they almost never walk to the riverside or to the...? - Not really. Sometimes I fail to, I mean, I fail to. I should probably be like, you're allowed to go over there or something. But I guess, they don't feel like it belongs to them, maybe I'm not sure. That's maybe the way that I subconsciously got like. They are like, so this is not my area. I am not really entirely sure, because they are onlookers. They are not really. I mean they are onlookers, they are just experiencing that like vicariously for me, also as a resident I am talking about my experiences there. But they don't feel any entitlement or ownership to that space, so maybe they don't

feel like they can go and just poke around. And also I tell them that we are trespassing, so obviously, they are little like hesitant too, because I am sure that that influences them as well.' (Anderson, 2010)

Here Stacey typifies tourists as onlookers who do not feel any ownership to the space, what is more they feel hesitant to poke around because they have heard they are trespassing. Being an onlooker means to just visually consume the space, listen to the tour guides stories, and leave after some minutes. This passive attitude differs from regular users of the Cuvrybrache who really engage themselves with the area. Furthermore, these tourists are part of a group, which also explains their restricted behaviour. They have joined an organised tour, and thereby acknowledged the group 'discipline'. Tour guides do not encourage group members to leave the group and explore everything themselves.

According to Stacey participants of the tour feel satisfied after attending the tour, and they highlight the visit to the Blu mural paintings. Tourists really feel they have experienced the 'underground' Berlin, that they have seen something unconventional. It is not a coincidence that Stacey avoids telling them that for example *Tacheles* is visited by large groups of tourists every day. During the interview she admits that

places like Tacheles and the East Side Gallery can not be defined as underground anymore: 'It's not at all underground, it's actually like a pretty mainstream tourist attraction.' (Anderson, 2010). Whether the Cuvrybrache can be seen as an underground place can be discussed. It had some media coverage, and is mentioned within the Lonely Planet (four lines reserved for the place) but still it is a minor tourist location. The former section about subcultures has shown that different subcultures are present at the place, so maybe the tourists have really experienced parts of underground Berlin.

Tourists have no great impact on the area, as they are just onlookers. The 'alternative tour Berlin' might have raised awareness among its participants, but Stacey does not believe they will start campaigning for these kind of places back home. Meanwhile, she cannot recall any conflicts between other users and the tourists. She thinks tourists are rather harmless: 'They're kind of like flies on the wall, sort of thing.' (Anderson, 2010). Undeniably, a tourist guide will not be eager to criticise her source of income, yet reactions of other users confirm her statements. If the place would get more popular, complaints of regular user will occur, but until now the place has not been overwhelmed by tourists groups.

The rising popularity of the Cuvrybrache was mentioned by

several users, and mostly not qualified as something positive. To Henry for example it was a totally new development that tourists groups visit the Cuvrybrache. Lisa respects tourists, and understands that they take pictures of the graffiti. She has, however, also her complaints about some of them:

"Aber manche sind respektlos. Ich meine wie gesagt die kotzen hier überall hin, die scheissen hier überall hin, die kacken hier ja auf die Brache. Ich meine, das tun die Hunde auch, dann können die das auch. Das ist mir egal. Und immer das betrunkene Pack, das mit Drogen, und dass einen dann auch blöd anmacht. Weißt du so. Das nervt einfach! Nicht immer aber manchmal nervt das halt." (Lisa)

Apparently some tourists behave inappropriately at the Cuvrybrache, which Lisa strongly disapproves. Nevertheless, the rest of the respondents did not mention incidents with tourists.

In comparison to regular visitors, tourists get to know much about the place in a short time. Whereas locals have more firsthand experiences and mostly do not have a comprehensive idea of the history and context of the place. Tourist experience the Cuvrybrache as part of a tourist tour that encompasses 'alternative' sites in Berlin. For them the mural

painting is the main attractive element of the place, they feel impressed by it and by the openness of the area. Their behaviour limits to listening, looking, and taking pictures. They stick to the area close to the entrance, which can be explained by the lack of entitlement they feel towards the space and the fact of being part of a group. However, it must be noted that this analysis focused on the experience of participants of an organised tour, and therefore does not speak for the other tourist. These might have other associations and experiences at the Cuvrybrache.

8.7 Presence of the past – 'Yeah, and this I also will never forget'

Users' memories play a role in their current experiences of a place. The past lives on through collected experiences of people. Throughout this whole chapter users' memories and stories are analysed and related to each other, but here a specific focus is given on the history of the Cuvrybrache and its meaning as a *bridge to the past*. This section handles about the presence of the past, within the minds of people and through its physical appearance.

8.7.1 Traces of the past – 'You still see a lot of this...border protection'

Traces of the past have different shapes and structures. Some users remembered former functions of the site. For example Ismael, who tells about the flea market which was organised once a week at the Cuvrybrache. This section outlines first the associations with the Wall, to be followed by memories of the YAAM beach bar. Tom draws attention towards the physical traces of the border between the East and West. Remains of the border protection can still be seen:

'You still see a lot of this...border protection from the GDR from here. You see on the other side there is this platform just disappeared, like on the eastern, not on this. But you see it if

you stand on the eastern side there was still this fundament. This platform of the, of a watch tower. Then you had like the steal stuff inside the river. So you see this as well.' (Tom)

So, he is aware of the history of Berlin and how it relates to the Cuvrybrache. Lisa also recalls the Wall and its close location to the Cuvrybrache. She mentions that the warehouses, which are now inhabited by Universal and other media companies, did not have any windows. East-Berlin citizens could hardly have a view onto the West side of Berlin:

,Genau, da konnte man gar nicht rüber gucken. Also schon, konnte man natürlich schon aber von der ostdeutschen Seite her nicht. Diese Spreespeicher, wo jetzt diese Eierspeicher wo Universal drin ist. Das war komplett zu, das war keine Fenster drin. Und das gab es ja alles auch noch gar nicht. Das war alles platt und Beobachtungsposten und die Spree war ja auch vermint. Mit Minen...total krass...und es ist jetzt gerade die Zeit. Es ist jetzt zwanzig Jahre.' (Lisa)

In 1989 the wall fell and as a consequence voids popped up within the urban fabric of Berlin. Mareike perceives the Cuvrybrache as one of these *post-wall areas*. She is aware that the wall was not located at the Cuvrybrache, but for her the place gives the same feeling as the other urban voids. She

calls it one of the last: 'shining beacons of of yeah like the post-wall areas' (Mareike).

Next, as has been noted in chapter Xxx the Cuvrybrache provided space for the bar YAAM. This former function lives on by regular visitor Andreas, he even calls the empty plot after it: 'Altes Yaam Gelände' (Andreas), his friends know then where is talking about. Andreas cherishes warm memories about the time the YAAM was there. He tells about a great dancehall clash:

'Yeah. Well I mean there is this thing it's called YAAM, which means Young African Art Market, which is like a a, it's like a real, it's a Sunday institution I would say. Now the YAAM is a bit more down the river on the other side. Yeah you have many Africans there selling food and reggae music. You can chill out there on Sundays after party weekend and they have a kids corner. You have like a beach atmosphere there, it started here. And here you had some barracks, where they had great dancehall sound clash. Where you had like two sound systems competing and like a crowd in there with a, was heist pfeiffe?, with like whistles whistles and those air pressure horns and you know. It was like, it was the craziest sound clash I have ever seen in my life. It was one of the best party times I have seen in Berlin. It was on this ground also.

They had a big soccer, beach soccer field and...one friend of mine he was like shooting a real hard shot, you know. The ball was going like fifty meters and he was hitting a beautiful women right in the face with this ball. Laughing. Yeah, and this I also will never forget. And this was like the first location of YAAM, where it started. I really like this also.

The above is a special experience for Andreas. To him the Cuvrybrache is 'sacred ground', because the YAAM started at this place. This whole story of Andreas reveals how experiences from years ago still have their influence on current use and perception. What is more, it has become a meaningful place to Andreas, due to its former function.

8.7.2 Bridge to the past – 'I found myself strongly reminded of London, seventies' London'

For some of the respondents the character of the Cuvrybrache, its physical appearance reminded them of their youth. The place provides linkages to their past, and they might therefore maintain a sense of continuity and wholeness in their lives by visiting the plot (see section 4.4.5). Andreas' memories of his frequent holidays at the seaside already revealed the direct link between the Cuvrybrache and his youth. He feels better after a visit to the Cuvrybrache, due to the moving water that reminds him of his holidays (see section

8.4.2). The Cuvrybrache also reminded Josie of her youth, specifically the times she played as a kid at abandoned spaces in London:

'I moved here two and a half years ago from Australia and I live just down the street. So this was the first thing I noticed because I like these empty lots very much. I grew up in London and...until I was twelve and... in the seventies in London there were many open spaces like this. And they were my favourite places to play. So when I moved to Berlin...oohh!! Wooww!! This is very cool, let's check it out. There is graffiti, it's all kind of a bit hidden. And yeah...so I come here now quite a bit actually...yeah. So it remembers you also of your childhood? - Yes it does. Laughs. Yeah.' (Josie)

Later in the interview she mentions it again:

'And when I came to Berlin to visit the first time. I found myself strongly reminded of London, seventies' London. I was trying to figure out why? And it's because of these...the undeveloped nature of the city. The yet to be developed.'

When Josie saw the Cuvrybrache for the first time it directly reminded her of her youth. She has vivid and positive memories about it, which is conveyed by her enthusiastic way of talking. Several aspects here show the interaction between activities, perception and stories. Josie perceives the Cuvrybrache as a place similar to her youth in London, the physical appearance makes her think of it. As a consequence she regularly visits the site, discovers it and feels good being there.

To Lisa the Cuvrybrache is also meaningful, her behaviour has been described extensively in the section about *my place*. At this moment is just added that Lisa explained her need for a quiet solitary morning by referring to her youth. She tells she needs to see the horizon, because she grew up at the countryside. Thus, Lisa got used to an environment characterized by quietness and a clear view upon the horizon during her childhood. In Berlin, she seeks for this experience and finds it at the Cuvrybrache. It makes her feel well, and gives her energy for the whole day.

In brief, Andreas, Josie and Lisa feel connected to their youth experiences during a visit to the Cuvrybrache. The place forms for them a bridge to their personal past. The former analyses have shown that the past has its presence at the Cuvrybrache. Stories of the Wall, London in the seventies illustrate that different temporalities co-exist within one space. Temporalities embodied by the users. The future also exists at

the Cuvrybrache. Plans for offices, lofts and a hotel have been designed for years now, and if they right investor is found building will start. Current users are aware of the uncertain state of the area, and at that moment the future becomes part of the present. How do the current users think of the future of the Cuvrybrache? An answer to this question will be formulated in the next section.

8.8 Media Spree and Neue Spreespeicher – 'They're not thinking about other values that are also nice of cities'

As this research attempts to analyse the conflict between the conceived space on the one hand and the perceived, and lived space on the other hand it makes sense to ask current users about this tension. Lisa, for instance, speaks of this tension quite clearly: "... vielleicht muss man einfach auch mal darauf achten was die Menschen daran finden und nicht nur Immobilienmenschen' (Lisa). She asks for attention for the opinions of the current users, and this will happen here. At this place the voices of the current users are added to the debate. They react on the Neue Spreespeicher plans and the Media Spree development. The next questions direct the discussion: 'What do current users think about the plans for offices, lofts and a hotel? How do **they** actually value the place? And do they maybe have alternatives in their mind?'. 8.8.1 Opinions about future developments—, **die könnten**

den Platz eigentlich so lassen'

At the end of the conversation all respondents were asked to give their opinion about the Media Spree developments and the related Neue Spreespeicher design. They reacted straightforward on the prospect of offices, lofts and a hotel being realised at the Cuvrybrache, some first reactions: 'stupid' (Mareike), 'nicht schön' (Ismael), 'Scheiße!' (Hannah), 'it's a shame' (Róisín), 'I wouldn't like to see offices there' (Andreas), 'Das brauchen wir nicht.' (Lisa), 'auch richtig Scheiße' (Christian), 'ziemlich blöd' (Linda), 'oh Gott!' (Susanne), Schwachsinn' (Sebastian). These words leave no chance of misinterpretation, cries of disbelief and terms of abuse take turns. Current users definitely do not appreciate future developments at *their* free place. Most respondents prefer to preserve the current status-quo, Andreas summarizes their feelings about upcoming changes: 'I really would enjoy to have this place more or less preserved like it is right now open for the public and not finding something build here...' (Andreas).

Before more is said about their opinions, it must be noted that quite a few respondents admitted lacking knowledge about Media Spree, and even less knew about the Neue Spreespeicher buildings. In these cases the interviewer gave a short summary of these plans, and then asked for their opinion about it. At the time of the interviews the future of the club/bar/restaurant Bar 25 was a hot topic within the local media and youth scene. Therefore some respondents associated Media Spree with the uncertain future of Bar 25.

Users give several arguments for their opinions. First of all, they argue that there is no demand for office spaces in Berlin. Not beside reality they mention that the Neue Spreespeicher plan lacks necessity, because the city has a surplus of office space. This is often brought up by respondents, for instance by Róisín: 'I mean in Berlin there is already too much office space.' (Róisín). Mareike adds to the discussion that if a (creative) company wants to move to Berlin they will find space, and they probably will not appreciate the new building. Stefan underlines that: 'I think there are enough areas where media companies could settle down. In Friedrichshain or Kreuzberg. There is a lot of area which unused' (Stefan).

Secondly, some users realise that the Neue Spreespeicher offices, lofts and hotel will form a misfit with the character of the neighbourhood. The project contrasts with the whole atmosphere of Wrangelkiez. Susanne states vigorously:

, Man kann ja ruhig investieren und neue Gebäude bauen und neue Projekten irgendwie starten. Aber ich finde, das kommt einfach darauf an wie, und wenn diese Media Spree einfach wahllos Gebäude in dem Boden stampfen und Bürogebäude, dann ist das, finde ich nicht besonderes rucksichtvoll, also dem Bezirk gegenüber. Und dem Charakter des Bezirks hier.' (Susanne)

According to her Media Spree should not blindly put buildings along the river Spree, instead they should pay attention to the local context. Later on she remarks that visitors of a four star Hotel will not mix in easily with the Wrangelkiez inhabitants:

Abgesehen davon wurde einfach ein Vier-Sterne Hotel hier nicht hin passen. Dann fragt man sich auch: "Welche Leute kommen dann hierhin um ein Vier-Sternen Hotel zu gehen in Kreuzberg?". In diesem Kreuzberg, in dem Gammelkiez (Susanne)

Susanne finds it hard to imagine that people will visit a four star hotel in Kreuzberg, in the middle of an area nicknamed by her as 'Gammelkiez' which means so much as messy neighbourhood. Sebastian agrees upon this: 'und das Problem ist das Kreuzberg irgendwie einige andere Leute zu Hause, sind als Leute die in Hotels gehen, in vier Sterne Hotels gehen oder sonst irgendwas machen.' (Sebastian). In brief,

Kreuzberg inhabitants differ considerably to four star hotel visitors according to these respondents.

What is more, users stated that there is already a surplus of hotels in Berlin. Therefore they question the plan for a hotel, is there actually a need for adding more beds? Sebastian cannot recall any city which has more four star hotels: 'Es gibt 21 Vier-Sterne_Hotels. Es gibt fast keine Stadt, Großstadt die so viele Sterne Hotels hat.' (Sebastian).

Whereas most respondents shared a preference to strongly disapprove of the Media Spree developments and the Neue Spreespeicher project, some more nuanced opinions were also given. Tom for example admitted that it is a complex discussion:

So you are not in favour of the Media Spree developments, that they could build something?- I mean it's not so much about Media Spree. This is really really very complex, in general it doesn't really make sense to stop city development right? And...it's really hard the whole process and discussion about how to do it right. And so I don't really want talk too much about that. But it's obvious I think it's... there are concepts that make much more sense here then finding a big like external investor doing, building something

here, which has got nothing to do here with the history of the place, with the surroundings. Which is basically just building some office units and commercial centre. You know. Which, yeah is not really necessary.

Nonetheless, Tom in the end also does not see the necessity of realising the Neue Spreespeicher. Without denying the truthiness of any of the former opinions, inhabitants often have a tendency to protest against any changes in their living environment which might explain their negative views upon Media Spree. And if something really has to change they prefer it to happen outside their backyard. It is therefore worthwhile to have a look at the value of the Cuvrybrache for its current users, do they have more to say than just: 'not in my backyard'?

8.8.2 Value of the Cuvrybrache – 'this is Berlin'

Throughout this whole chapter the value of the Cuvrybrache to its users has been studied, done by analysis of their activities, perceptions and stories. At this moment, however, respondents explicitly speak about the value the Cuvrybrache has to them, in reaction on the future plans. This section reveals that the place has certain meanings to its temporary users and these conflict with the view of the investor: 'I mean they just think about the money and they're not thinking about other

values that are also nice of cities.' (Róisín). Current users value the place, due to its location along the river, and its contribution to Berlin's identity and liveability.

To start with its location along the river, users again underline the importance of this (see also section 8.4). Being close to floating water makes the area attractive and valuable for its users. While discussing the Neue Spreespeicher project users regret that another area along the river Spree will not be accessible anymore to the public:

I think there is probably enough office space which you can use, but what there is not enough is places accessible for the public on the water and not just the the little street next to the water. A little way where you can have a walk, but also where you can really sit close to the water, which is like the spot where you met me. You can really be right next to the water and have some grass behind you and it's really really feng shui kind of place. You know. It's really precious.' (Andreas)

Users further associate the Cuvrybrache with the city Berlin. They see it as a part of Berlin's identity. For example Jonas, who says: 'it's Berlin....it's dirty, it's nice and huge' or Mareike who states: 'But from my point of view this is very Berlin,

this is very very much Berlin...' (Mareike). Berlins identity is defined by respondents as a city that has a lot of empty places that offer opportunities for creativity, for grassroots movements, for public life, for graffiti art. Places like the Cuvrybrache, Bar 25, YAAM and Oststrand. As a consequence users fear that Berlin will lose its special character if these kind of spaces keep on disappearing, Róisín about it:

"...if they develop the whole thing. I think it would just make Berlin like every other capital city. And not pleasant to live in." (Róisín).

Stefan is also concerned about Berlin's future:

'This is why people come here to live here, come here as tourists. This is...this is Berlin. You have to keep it, otherwise you become a city like London, or Stockholm or Paris. Kind of a boring city. This is exactly why young people come to Berlin.' (Stefan)

Thus, according to the users the Cuvrybrache is one of the places that gives Berlin its unique character and should therefore be handled with care.

In line with the above argument users value the Cuvrybrache

because to them it is a free place, which contributes to the liveability of the city. Katherina articulates that: 'people need places like this, to make things you want.' (Katherina). So there is a need for free places, Mareike minds if she cannot use the Cuvrybrache anymore:

'Because I like that there are places which don't have a function, because it means that the city is still alive. That the city gives people the opportunity to give things a function and not to be given. So...I would mind.' (Mareike)

And alive is the Cuvrybrache, it is really used by Wrangelkiez inhabitants. Linda would therefore regret if building will start:

'und das hier ist halt so ein kleine Platz, der wirklich tatsachlich von den Leuten benutzt wird die hier leben und warum soll man das auch noch wegnehmen?' (Linda)

Finally, Josie makes a parallel to the commons in Britain before the industrial revolution to illustrate the diverse use of the Cuvrybrache.

To me it's a little bit like the commons. You know, this old fashioned thing they used to have in towns and villages in

Britain. This areas called the commons. It was like this a space and it wasn't owned by anyone and...if you had some sheep, or some cows or some horses you...They needed to eat some grass. So they would be bring them to the commons. So people's sheep and horses and cows are just all eating the grass and hanging out and having somewhere to be. And ehm...it was all publicly used it wasn't taxed or anything like that. And that kind of...this is a bit like a commons. (Josie)

Josie suggests that it should be protected for future developments, because of this *common* like character. She, in fact, pleas for a place that contributes to the liveability of a city. A free place accessible and open to a wide variety of people and activities. Josie admits that there is ongoing struggling in almost every city between artists and financiers about these kind of places. In brief, current users value the Cuvrybrache for its location to the water, as a place representing Berlins identity, and as a contribution to the city's liveability.

8.8.3 Imagined alternatives – 'Ja, wir müssen das einfach kaufen Sebastian und hier ein Wagenburg hier machen.'

During the discussion about the future of the Cuvrybrache several users brought up alternatives. They had diverse ideas about who the place could get a new function. Some respondents were eager to fill in the current lack of programming, others realise that the unique character of the place will be lost.

Both Katherina and Linda suggest that a park should be realised at the spot. To them the government should just plant trees, put some banks over there and get rid of the fence. Linda argues: "Ich fände es persönlich schöner, wenn sie einen Park daraus machen wurden, hier stehen genug Häuser und es konnte einfach ein schöner Treffpunkt sein für alle mögliche." (Linda). Yet, Henry and Tom foresee difficulties if an official park will be realised. In the case of becoming a public space, visitors have to respect rules and security norms. Henry fears that they will not have the freedom to sustain the garden the way they do it now:

'Maybe they will want to test the food, saying students come here and eat the plants and some are poisoned or I don't what. You know so. So yeah it's difficult. Once it belongs to the city you have to respect some norms, security norms. That's the problem of our society.' (Henry).

In order to 'not making it a planned area' Tom suggests to look at a project in Hamburg called 'Park Fiction' (ParkFiction, 2010). There a strong citizen movement succeeded in creating a space 'for everybody'.

Other respondents freely fantasised about future functions of the Cuvrybrache. If Róisín could decide she would expand the guerrilla-garden, and especially plant potato plants (she origins from Britain). Susanne wishes to see a cultural forum at the side. Christian and Hans could imagine: 'riesen großen Dings Chill-out Area irgendwie hin bauen, Fußballplatz und Baketballplatz und Volleyballplatz alles', and also a beach bar at the Cuvrybrache, or a club. They however emphasize that the area close to the water should be preserved as it is now, it should be kept as a space for hanging out and graffiti spraying. Laura and Sebastian spontaneously suggest to buy the plot and realise a 'Wagenburg' together (which is an alternative community that lives together in caravans). On the whole, respondents cannot be blamed for a lack of imagination.

In conclusion, most respondents strongly disapprove future developments at the Cuvrybrache. They prefer the current status-quo, which gives them a wide variety of opportunities. Respondents argued against the plans, by mentioning that there is already a surplus offices and hotels in Berlin, and that it would not fit into the character of the neighbourhood. They value the Cuvrybrache for its location along the river. Respondents see it as part of Berlin's identity, and value its contribution to the liveability of the city. Some of the users

used the opportunity to present alternatives, of which a park was mentioned most often. Their imagined functions reveal their creative qualities, but also a shortage of realistic reasoning. This discussion was a leap forward towards the conclusion of this research, as it enabled research participants to ventilate their view on the problem statement. They had the opportunity to comment on the tension between the conceived space of the Cuvrybrache and its socio-cultural value. And they spoke vigorously.

8.9 Conclusion

To conclude, the above collection-of-stories-so-far represent the wasteland along the river Spree. Despite being fragmented and off limited reach they reveal that the Cuvrybrache is experienced by users as a *free place*. Negotiations within and between both human and nonhuman take place and produce the different themes outlined above. In other words, users' activities, perceptions and stories continuously interact with each other. Therefore this chapter must be seen as a sketch of a place, it is colourful snapshot of the event of place. This sketch consists of different themes that relate to each other, and they have a specific relation to the main theme *free place*.

8.9.1 Free place – relations between the themes

First of all, users experience a sense of freedom at the Cuvrybrache. It consists of freedom in activities and the environment provides which give them an open, free, empty experience. This relates to the next theme lack of programming, which has shown that users find it hard to categorise the place. Being free of function is appreciated by users and creates possibilities for diverse activities and social interactions. The uncertain state of the area, its ephemeral character gives the area a certain poignancy. After the lack of programming it goes on towards a further investigation of users' perception of the area. Visibility and accessibility, trash/ traces and urban nature, these three themes show the direct interaction between the physical structure of the place and the humans who use it. The fence gives the users a feeling of being hidden, and it limits at the same time the accessibility. Due to the fence, users feel free to do whatever they want. It gives a certain security for illegal activities like spraying, bonfires and guerrilla-gardening. The presence of dirt further creates a wild feeling, although disapproved by a lot. The cans and cigarette boxes indicate the temporary use of the place. What is more, the greenery is typified as wild by respondents and some value it as *urban nature*.

The above themes have introduced the area, users characterised the area. From then on the focus shifted towards the performed activities. First, one of the most important conclusion has been formulated and that is that the Cuvrybrache functions as a popular hang-out place, and the view on the river plays a major role in this. Users find themselves sitting at an oasis in the middle of the city. It is a quite quiet site where one can enjoy the sun, watch the river and relax. The social interaction at this hang-out has then been studied, which revealed that there is a tension between solitary visits and meeting friends. The Cuvrybrache means both *my place* and *social platform*.

Related to the social platform function is that the Cuvrybrache offers space to subcultures. Activities on the margins of society find their place at the Cuvrybrache. It has considerable value to the graffiti scene, due to the walls for graffiti and Blu's mural paintings. The latter defining the area by its omnipresence. Another subculture finds it way at the Cuvrybrache: guerrilla-gardening. An initiative started for the joy of gardening and as a political statement against the Neue Spreespeicher plans. The loose network of gardeners manages the uncertainty of illegal gardening. After a day at the office it gives them fulfilment to work in their garden and to eat their self-grown vegetables. As a last point regarding the perfor-

mance of 'alternative' activities is mentioned that the place serves as background for photo-shoots. The place turns into a theatre for shoots, and is enjoyed by onlookers for the *freaky* happenings. Further on, tourists experience the Cuvrybrache as part of a tour that attends several *alternative* sites in Berlin. Their behaviour concentrates on the area near the entrance and limits to visual consumption of the site, which might be explained by being *onlookers*, being part of a group and the absence of entitlement towards the space. It kind of frightens them to explore it themselves.

The last part of this chapter handled about the past and future being present at the Cuvrybrache. To start with the former, some users see traces of the past at the place, be it from the Wall or a former function. Moreover, the Cuvrybrache means to some a bridge to their personal past. Within the users the past lives on at the Cuvrybrache. The future of the Cuvrybrache has also introduced itself at the place. Users strongly disapprove Media Spree and Neue Spreespeicher, they prefer the current status-quo. They did not see the necessity of building offices, lofts and a hotel and argued vigorously about the value of the Cuvrybrache. This last discussion created space for the respondents within this research to comment on the tension between the socio-cultural value and the economic value of the site.

8.9.2 Different perspectives – Meanings that conflict

Conflicts are inherent to urban spaces, according to Massey there can be no assumption of pre-given coherence and this also the case at the Cuvrybrache (Massey, 2005). Places are complex, full of contradictions and shifting perspectives. Former analysis have illustrated this. Think for example of the different perspectives on the dirty appearance of the Cuvrybrache. Negative qualifications were ventilated by respondents, but others appreciated it because it created a wild feeling. The dirt was perceived as a sign of the Cuvrybrache being a free place, an environment not cleaned by any authority. Thus, negotiations between humans and nonhumans have different outcomes. Another conflict that exists at the Cuvrybrache has to do with its crowdedness. Users value the place for being quiet. They call it my place and thereby claim it for their solitary visits of introspection. Yet, another group of respondents values the place as a social platform. They meet friends and socialize, which might disturb the peace of the other visitors. My place visitors tactic is too avoid the busy hours at the Cuvrybrache, and come in the morning.

In addition, interpretations differ as shown by the explanation of the mural paintings. One told it had to with the East-West division, to someone else it meant 'big brother is watching you'. These are different interpretations, but it does

not entail a conflict. More tension can be felt between the guerrilla-gardeners and the other users hanging around. In an attempt to avoid vandalism, the gardeners located their garden on the margins of the wasteland. As a consequence most users are unaware of the garden. The gardeners also discussed whether to leave the instruments free for use for everyone or to lock them. They choose for the first option, and it went well for some months and then the wheelbarrow was stolen.

In comparison to regular users, tourist have a totally different perspective on the place. Tourists passively consume the area, whereas regulars really engage themselves with the place. During their 'Alternative Berlin' tour tourists are told they will *trespass*, in an attempt to give them a *thrilling* experience. Regulars, on the contrary, just walk onto the plot knowing that it's not a problem to be there. Then, tourists get a lot of information in short period of time. Although regular visitors have much more firsthand experiences, they mostly have bits of the story, not the whole thing at once. A lot of the respondents were, for example, unaware that the artists of the mural paintings is Blu. As last point, it may happen that the tourist 'influx' increases at the Cuvrybrache, if so chances rise for conflicts with regular users'. Former analysis might have given the impression that a coherence exists among tourists, that they behave and perceive the space in the same way.

There are however individual tourists, that explore the space Cuvrybrache themselves. They get a totally different experience of the area as participants of the tour. Moreover, participants of the tour might get recalcitrant and leave the group to have a look at the river, or at the garden in the corner. Thus, the former story should not be interpreted as a static universal statement, but as a process entailing contradictions. What is more this applies also to the other stories, these are all vulnerable to change and reinterpretation.

Until now differences among respondents have been highlighted, but the place also has different meanings to one single person. Contradictions and multilayered stories exists within human beings. Take for example Lisa, who values the place as *her* hidden place. Like in her youth she can relax and see the horizon there. She visits it every day with her dog. At the same time she organised a photo-shoot for her clothing shop at the Cuvrybrache. Thus, besides being a bridge to her past, the place also functions as the background for a photo-shoot. As she is a regular users, she has collected many experiences at the place, both positive and negative, therefore the place is meaningful to her.

Another example of multiple meanings inhabited within one person is Andreas. To him the place is sacred ground, because

it was home to the beach bar YAAM. He has vivid memories of parties at the Cuvrybrache, therefore he still calls it 'altes Yaam Gelände'. He, however, also values the place for its location next to the river. If he is almost eaten up by the different rhythms of the city, he pays a visit to the Cuvrybrache and calms down just by looking at the moving water. The place has again multiple meanings to one person.

It has been argued throughout this chapter that users qualify the Cuvrybrache as free place, but there are exceptions. Linda does not feel free at the Cuvrybrache. She acknowledges that the place is hidden and open to different activities. She even enjoys all the strange happenings at the place, but she remains an onlooker. She explains that if she would visit the place, her boss could see her from his office. Thus, for Linda it is not a free place at all, because her boss might observe her activities and this limits her behaviour.

8.9.3 The socio-cultural value of the Cuvrybrache

In conclusion, a colourful snapshot of the event of place has been made through analysis of conversations with users. The Cuvrybrache is experienced by current users as a *free place*, which is conveyed by their diverse and convincing stories about it. To start with their perception of the environment which influence their behaviour. Current users feel hidden,

notice the limited accessibility. The trash and bushes create a *wild* feeling. Users value the Cuvrybrache for its location along the river, the free hang-out zone for having a barbecue, being alone for a moment and for meeting friends. This hang-out function has several characteristics, users value the easiness, the quite quietness, the river. On top of it, finds the graffiti scene space for their activities at the plot. At the margins of the area a loose network of gardeners grew their own vegetables. Free place entails then, that it offers the opportunity for *subcultures*, for activities on the margins of society. The Blu mural paintings attract tourists to the plot, and enrich the neighbourhood with urban art. Hence, the *free place* contrasts with the conventional spaces in the city. Current users appreciated the uncertain, open character of the place. They value it for providing an unusual and rare experience.

9. Conclusion

This journey started with a visit to Berlin. I was sitting in the S-Bahn and was looking at the city. Houses, factories, offices, streets and people passed by. My eyes got stuck on the empty spaces in between. The wastelands located in the middle of the city intrigued me: 'What do they mean to the people living here?'. I belief this research has revealed that these wastelands aren't waste at all. They can be meaningful places to citizens.'

In this chapter the research results are discussed. First of all, it will be concluded that the Cuvrybrache is a meaningful place to its current users. Results of observations and conversations show that the place is used for different activities. Moreover, the stories, which have been told by respondents, form a heterogeneous collection. As the concept place is understood as a process of interwoven stories, this research should be interpreted as such. It is a snapshot of an indeterminate space in Berlin, an ethnographic attempt to convey the multiple meanings of a place. This chapter aims to discuss the following problem statement:

What does the 'Cuvrybrache', a temporary used indeterminate space in Berlin, mean to its users conveyed by their activities, stories and perceptions, and how does this contemporary social-cultural value conflict with the conceived space of the neo-liberal urban planning project Media Spree?

Research results will be discussed in the following sections. It starts with the analysis of the *conceived space*. As second item is presented the dialogue between the three concepts *activities, perceptions and stories*. Then, the current use of the plot is discussed in the section *spatial practices*, which is followed by a brief outline of the *free place* theme. The synthesis between the spatial practices and users' experiences will be formulated at the section about the *socio-cultural value* of the Cuvrybrache. Then, the conflict between the conceived space and the socio-cultural value is highlighted. This discussion is enriched with recommendations for the future. In addition, some thoughts are given upon the phenomenology of places. Finally, several directions for future research are given.

9.1 Conceived space – Neue Spreespeicher and Media Spree

Negotiations between different actors produce the conceived space of the Cuvrybrache, respectively between the Bezirksamt, the Senat, the land-owner IVG, and the organi-

sation Media Spree. Study of planning documents and conversations with urban planners and academics have led to an insight into the conceived space. There is a long history of urban plans which have been designed for the place, reaching from a technology centre to a shopping centre. The internationally active real-estate developer IVG plans to realise offices, lofts and a four-star hotel. In 2002, IVG received permission to realise the Neue Spreespeicher buildings. IVG aims to attract creative companies to the offices, and their strategy is to form a creative cluster with the buildings opposite of the river which they also own. These plans have been developed within the context of the harbour redevelopment plan Media Spree. The Berlin authorities seem to imitate other major Western cities, in their attempt to turn their old industrial waterfront into prime real estate for the real affluent. Yet, in Berlin a wide social movement has protested successfully against these plans. It led to the dismantling of the lobby-organisation. IVG is therefore very careful with offering opportunities for official temporary use at the place, because they do not want to risk that this project will become popular among the Wrangelkiez inhabitants. Protests, however, have not led to changes of building permissions, because the Berlin government cannot afford the financial compensation which the real-estate developer will ask for. In brief, the Cuvrybrache is conceived as the future location for offices, lofts and hotel. It has economic

value to the real-estate developer IVG. In comparison to their knowledge about the future developments, urban planners lack understanding of the current use of the Cuvrybrache.

9.2 Interrelated concepts: activities, perceptions and stories

The upcoming conclusions about the multiple meanings of the Cuvrybrache are based upon the analysis of three concepts: *activities, perceptions and stories*. As an illustration of the dialogue between the three main concepts I would like to present the story of Mareike. She tells about her discovery of the Cuvrybrache:

'... so I had just a little bit more time to go around and so I just walked along the street and I thought: "okay, there must be the riverside". I have been seeing these trees there, these dark trees, very, very full of leaves. I thought well, looks interesting and then I saw this kind of place, there is not really quite like green grass or so, but it's like an area of nothing and I thought 'Wow, this is cool!'. There were people, there was a couple on this evening. They came out of it and I thought it's a nice place to get lost actually. To get lost and to...to...to run away from the world a bit? So, and you do anything you want to do.' (Mareike)

Mareike walks around in Wrangelkiez, that is her 'activity' at that moment. While walking she sees trees and remembers that the riverside should be on that side. She reacts on her remembrance and perception of the environment by taking a closer look, and by doing so she discovers the Cuvrybrache. When she notes that it is an area of 'nothing' and 'there is not really quite like green grass or so'the importance of perception of an environment is again revealed. On the basis of this observation **and** her assumptions about this kind of places she concludes that it is a good place to 'qet lost' and to 'do anything you want to do'. These assumptions origin from memories she has of similar places. This first experience at the plot influenced her behaviour. When she told the story, she was sitting on the concrete strip and was 'just looking at the river, and dreaming away'. Thus, she returned (activity) to the Cuvrybrache because she remembered (story) that it was a perfect area (perception) to relax and to get lost (activity).

Mareike's story is just one example of how people experience a place. It all happens at the same time: activity, perception and the memorising of stories. These processes influence each other continuously and are hard to distinguish from each other. In order to understand the multiple meanings of a place it is necessary to study these processes.

9.3 Spatial practices

Observation results have shown the kind of use and the rhythms of use. In other words, the Cuvrybrache is not just the future site for office developments, but also a space which provides opportunities for a wide variety of activities, both legal and illegal. *Uncertain locales* have been developed through repeated use, for example the graffiti spraying at the walls or the popular urinate spots on the edges of the plot. About the rhythms of use it can be said that it is more crowded at the weekend then during the week. Visitors mostly come in the afternoon and evening, mornings are quiet. Crowdedness depended on the weather, a rainy day had considerable less users.

The behaviour of the users has been mapped to show how they transform a blank space. No signs or formal paths influence their behaviour. Movement maps illustrate the tension of user to directly walk through one of the two entrances towards the river, where the popular hang-out area is located. Tourists behave differently, they remain at the first entrance to take pictures and visually consume the space. Dog-owners also take different routes, they tend to explore the whole area with their dogs.

The most common user at the Cuvrybrache is male and

between 20-39 years old, which gives an idea of the diversity of users at the place. Less women visit the Cuvrybrache, because some of them feel unsafe during the evenings. Apparently, the place is not inviting or attractive to children and elderly. As the activities at the Cuvrybrache are also distinct to ordinary city spaces, the place can be seen as an enclave in the city. An enclave that is inhabited by a specific user group (male, between 20-39), which offers opportunities for marginal activities. Yet, it must be noted that the main activity at the Cuvrybrache is sitting near the riverside, it is a popular hang-out spot within the Wrangelkiez neighbourhood.

9.4 Free place

The collection-of-stories show that the Cuvrybrache has multiple meanings to its current users. Each respondent collects his or her own experience at the plot. Analysis of conversations have led to the construction of the main theme *free place*. Free place means free of function, free social interaction, free of maintenance, free view on the river, free of police surveillance, and free of entrance fee. Yet, free means also that the place can be for one person *the* place to graffiti and for the other *the* place for solitary introspection. Restrictions create possibilities for the users, the fence provides shelter for their marginal activities. There is a paradox at work, its illegality has as consequence that more is possible. As long as people

do not push the boundaries, making bonfires, smoking grass, guerrilla-gardening can all take place. In other words, much is possible but not everything. Total anarchy will not last long at the Cuvrybrache, because neighbours and the police will intervene then. On the whole must be concluded that subcultures are *in place* at the Cuvrybrache.

Free place entails also that several conflicts and contradictions live on at the plot. First, to some the place means *my place*, to others it is a *social platform*. Second, tourists have a completely different experience than regular users. Third, trash is perceived as something negative, others value it because it signifies the wild character. Fourth, the guerrillagarden started in the corner, as they tried to avoid vandalism by other users. Among users multiple meanings exists, so does *Andreas* value the site as sacred ground, because used to be home to YAAM. At the same he cherishes it for being close to the river. Another example is given by *Linda*. who sees the potential of the space and enjoys watching the *freakshow* at the Cuvrybrache, but she does not experience freedom at the place as her boss can observe her from the office.

9.5 The socio-cultural value of an indeterminate space Although visited by a selective group of people, the Cuvrybrache has considerable socio-cultural value to the city.

First of all, it contributes to the diversity of the city by offering space to marginal alternatives activities. Subcultures as graffiti, and guerrilla-gardening are *in place* at the Cuvrybrache. Of more importance is the value as hang-out spot. Be it alone or with friends the view onto the river is an important value to all visitors. It is an appealing hang-out place for users, because they have place to sit near the river in the middle of the city. Furthermore, is it is not that crowded and the sounds are perceived as *'quite quiet'*. Observation results demonstrate that the Cuvrybrache is continuously used by people in different ways, it therefore has socio-cultural value.

Current users have underlined the value of the lack of programming. It provides a certain openness. There is an absence of fixed social routines, and its ephemeral character gives visits poignancy. There are not many urban spaces that do not carry any sign or planned function, the Cuvrybrache therefore has an enormous contribution to the liveability of the city. It offers opportunities for Berlin citizens to transform the space themselves, and they use this opportunity as has been shown by this research.

Respondents argued also that the place stands for the city's identity. Places like the Cuvrybrache make the city attractive for inhabitants and visitors. If the amount of these kind of

places diminishes, Berlin becomes a city like any other West-European city. This fear is ventilated by the current users.

9.6 Conflict between economic and socio-cultural value

The economic value of the Cuvrybrache conflicts with its socio-cultural value, IVG aims to realise offices, lofts and hotel at a place which is intensively used by Berlin citizens. Current users have (illegally) created a meaningful place that contributes to the liveability and diversity of the city. Although, it is not that cities need developments, they need to be able to grow and attract economic activities. At the same time, urban planners and real-estate developers should realise the potential and socio-cultural value of wastelands.

At the moment a status-quo exists, which is celebrated by the current users. IVG does not find (creative) companies that want to inhabit their offices. They furthermore do not provide temporary lease contracts for alternative initiatives like a temporary garden project. In order to prevent illegal use of the plot, the fence is sustained and locked again and again. Yet, current users find a way to open up the fence and enter the plot. They transform it into their space. In cities like London or Amsterdam, such an area would have been developed a long time ago. But due to the bad economic situation of Berlin, such a plot remains a wasteland for years. Due to

the current world-wide financial crisis, chances have further diminished for developments in the near future. Thus, the status-quo will probably last for a longer period of time. Or the IVG decides to sell the plot to another company, which might develop a new design for the plot.

As a consequence of the status-quo, citizens have used the Cuvrybrache for years now. Still, their activities are temporary. There were no long lasting claims of the space, and the sporadic moments that it happened the police intervened. On the whole, the place has an ephemeral character, which gives it a certain 'poignancy' to its visitors (Josie). Susanne even looked forward to the moment she could have nostalgic feelings about the loss of the Cuvrybrache as a hang-out place. The uncertain state of the area has been also revealed by the guerrilla-gardeners. They sustained a garden in the summer of 2009, but until now no further activities have been observed (June 2010). In other words, the loose network lasted only for one year. Again, there is a tension between the economic value and the socio-cultural value. The garden might have lasted longer, if one could have been sure that it could have been used for several years. This also shows the ongoing creation and destruction of meanings. Once in a while, formal happenings interrupt the current informal use. As for example the Circus, which leased the plot for a week in

autumn 2009. Suddenly, a Circus claims the space, which remembers the visitors that they lack entitlement to the space. Although, some respondents had positive memories about seeing a lama at the place.

In addition, some remarks about the Neue Spreespeicher project must be made. Both, urban planners and current users suggested that the project contrasts with the Wrangelkiez neighbourhood. The urban planner perceived this a chance for new developments. Current users, however, could hardly imagine a four star hotel to be realised in their neighbourhood or they mentioned that there is already a surplus of office space in Berlin, and the question arises why to build more of them at a 'precious' (Andreas) space along the river.

The Cuvrybrache is part of Berlin's identity, as it offers valuable space to subcultures and forms a popular hangout for Berliners. I suggest that it is a part of 'the global "brand Berlin" as innovative and "wild" cultural metropolis' (Scharenberg & Bader, 2009). Through development of the Cuvrybrache Berlin would loose a contributor to the global brand Berlin as a wild cultural metropolis. IVG and MediaSpree made use of this image to attract creative companies to Berlin, thereby damaging the drivers of this brand. Thus, there is a tension between free places like the

Cuvrybrache, which are breeding grounds for a wild cultural life and the objectives of investors to make money out of their property. Real-estate developers focus on the near future. It seems that they mainly care about their financial gains, but on the long run this could have as consequence that the city becomes less attractive to people and companies. Within the capital system real-estate cannot be blamed for a focus on financial gains. The city government, however, could play a more important role in this respect, therefore suggestions for urban policies will be made in the next section.

The highlighted conflict is also about the negotiations between urban planners, real-estate developers and citizens. Despite concerns of academics about the increasing influence of neoliberal forces, citizens reclaim urbanity. People strive for the diversity and liveability of their city, just by using an empty plot along the river. Some have incorporated the 'wasteland' into their daily urban lives, and value it for that. It proves the role of the *agency* within the neo-liberal city. Urban planning policies and real-estate developers receive resistance from citizens, through daily use and protest movements as *Media Spree Versenken!*. In conclusion, this research shows that the *wasteland* Cuvrybrache is not *wasted* at all, it is actually a meaningful place to people. In Lefebvre's words, the wasteland provides space for unplanned festivals,

which create a beautiful city.

9.7 Recommendations for the future

Based upon the former discussion I have outlined some recommendations for urban policy in order to sustain liveable and diverse cities. To start with the imagined functions that the current users have suggested during the conversations. Several respondents suggested that it would be a good thing if a park would be realised at the Cuvrybrache. Others suggested a beach-bar, sport field, or a community garden. All these suggestion would give the place an official function, thereby the unstructured un-programmed character of the place is lost. The free place is thereby not sustained, but transformed into one of the conceptual grab handles of the city. If for example a park would be realised, the area must be made accessible to everyone. Elderly and children should be able to visit the place. Moreover, rules need to be obeyed at public spaces, and as a consequence the marginal activities will be gone. The city government needs to justify their expenses, and it will not be easy to justify investments into spaces which are not open to the public and which offer opportunities for illegal activities.

Although this may be true, it has also been argued that the *free place* contributes to the diversity and liveability of the city. The Cuvrybrache has become part of the cities *wild* iden-

tity. In order to sustain *free places* like the Cuvrybrache, city governments should first acknowledge their socio-cultural value for the city. Then, they should train themselves in a *hands off* attitude, intervene as less as possible into the *free place* and just let it be a *free place*. Subcultures do not allow themselves to be managed, it would damage their dynamics. This also means that while designing a plan like *Media Spree* initiatives and temporary projects should be seen as part of the city, and not as threatening new developments.

Laissez-faire politics should not be interpreted as an advice to planners to stick to their writing desks. Not at all. This research has shown that there is a huge gap between the conceived space of planners and the perceived and lived space of citizens. In order to diminish this gap, urban planners need to get out of their office and investigate the city, at least once a week. Urban planners should get *streetwise*. The first step in the process of planning should be to visit the site, explore it, try to capture the meaning it has to its current users and then start to design it *or* not to design it at all. Urban planners should train themselves in deciding where to intervene and where to let developments happen. I believe that only then white zones on the map can become rich stories of experience. Blank spaces turn into colourful images of the city.

Another suggestion I would like to make is that land-owners should be enforced to allow temporary projects to happen, if their propriety remains unused for more than a year. Especially shrinking cities should try to ensure public life by demanding from real-estate developers to provide lease-contracts to temporary happenings like mobile garden projects, circus, festivals etc. After the fall of the wall, Berlin authorities have sold the Cuvrybrache to the company BOTAG. If they had included a clausal into the contract, which ensured that temporary use would be enabled. Then, the wasteland would have provided space to a wide variety of projects. This would have contributed to the liveability of Wrangelkiez.

9.8 Places – diverse and unstable

Besides the case-specific conclusion could this research also be seen as a illustration of how people transform places into *their* place, and how places have diverse and unstable meanings. Former analysis have shown that through their activities a space is claimed. Perception of the environment and collected stories influence their activities, and vice versa. As this ethnographic research illustrates, analysis of a place are never finished as the place changes all the time. Due to negotiations between humans and between humans and nonhumans. Another aspect can always be added to the description of the diverse meanings. In particular at a place

like the Cuvrybrache meanings are unstable, 'liable to go away like a butterfly' (Josie). This research indicates that different temporalities could exists at a place, both past and future were present at the Cuvrybrache. Contradictions and co-existence of different trajectories reveal that it is complex to fully understand a place. In order to understand the multiple meanings of the Cuvrybrache, this research will not give full satisfaction. Therefore one must visit the place itself and talk with its users. Words, numbers, images and analysis have failed to capture it fully.

9.9 Future research

At this point, some suggestions are given for future research. This research lacks the vision of the real-estate developer, as he did not react to my requests for an interview. The conceived space has been analysed here, through planning documents, and conversations with urban professionals. It would be very interesting to get a better understanding of the land owner's point of view. An interview with him could answer questions like: 'Why has not building not started yet? Is IVG aware of the current use, and what is their opinion about it?, Why did they choose for wooden fence, which creates shelter for its users?'.

Former investigations entailed two weeks of structured

observation and ten months of unstructured observations, due to time constraints. It would be relevant to research the Cuvrybrache or a similar place for a longer period, in order to see when stable patterns occur. A longer observation period would allow for more reliable results and it would enable conclusions upon the turning point of unstable temporary interventions into daily routines. It might also be the case that the place keeps on changing and that a longer research period would highlight the continuous readjustment of spaces.

Considering the recommendations that have been made in this chapter it would be wise to further investigate the urban planning process. Leading questions should be: 'Which factors play a role during the design process? How can a urban planner become streetwise? What are the best methods to take well-founded decisions on whether to intervene or not?'. This requires a different approach towards the subject. In respect to urban planning, it would be interesting to explore which urban planning tools could stimulate alternative temporary use. This master thesis has showed that the absence of authorities creates an unique place in the middle of the city. Comparison between different urban policies may confirm that the *hands-off* attitude should be preferred or that government incentives may be needed in cities with a higher demand for space.

Furthermore, future research could focus on other cities, which would enable comparison between different cases. It may answer the question, if temporary use also occurs in other cities and if there is something specific to Berlin. As has been mentioned in chapter 8, Kreuzberg inhabitants feel less fear to enter privately owned abandoned areas due its history of squatting and alternative lifestyles. Therefore, it could be expected that reclamation of abandoned spaces occurs less in other western cities, or takes on other forms. Future research should, thus, investigate what the causes of (informal) temporary projects are: What factors play a role? Does available spaces trigger the process, or is it the do it yourself attitude of inhabitants? Has this cultural causes, or has it mainly to do with the economic situation of a city?. Answering these kind of questions would provide valuable insights for urban policies and the future of our cities.

As last remark, this master thesis has shown that people value the lack of programming at the Cuvrybrache. Signs and regulations normally direct behaviour at places, but at wastelands like the Cuvrybrache people experience a sense of freedom and alternative aesthetics. Respondents have underlined the importance of this unexpected moment of freedom. Moreover, people have expressed their appreciation for the signs of decay, for the *wild* character of the environment.

Future research could further reflect on these two points, through a combination of philosophy, sociology and geography new perspectives on cities should be formulated. The following questions could lead the discussion: Do people (and especially policy makers) fear unplanned areas? Should we allow more decay and chaos in our cities? and, How can we provide opportunities for the unexpected?.



10. Wasted? Stories from a free place

Exhibition about the Cuvrybrache

In order to communicate the research results to the local community, I have organised an exhibition in cooperation with art association *Artitude* in June 2010. It has been an attempt to return users' stories to the place of origin and thereby enrich the debate about the demise of public space and in particular the local debate about the waterfront redevelopment plan *Mediaspree*. In this final chapter I briefly report about the design of the exhibition, the programme and the discussion which took place.

Aim of the Exhibition

The exhibition attempted to show the socio-cultural value of the Cuvrybrache, a wasteland along the river Spree, to a diverse public of neighbourhood inhabitants, academics and urban professionals. Through photography and text users' activities, perceptions and stories were communicated. Voices normally neglected were heard. Berlin, as a former capital of urban voids, is the right location to shed light on the potential of indeterminate spaces. It is *the* place to reveal to the public the possible meanings of wastelands. The exhibition has tried to contribute to the discussion about the liveability and diversity of our cities. It aimed to reveal the tension between the

conceived space of urban professionals and the lived space of citizens.

Through various channels was the exhibition promoted. Posters were spread throughout *Wrangelkiez*. A website provided extra information (http://cuvrybrache.blogspot.com), and invitations were sent with Facebook and an e-mail lists of the Humboldt university. The exhibition was also mentioned at the urban blog *Urbanophil.net*. Yet, most important were the spontaneous visitors of the exhibition, these people paid a visit at the Cuvrybrache and were suddenly confronted with the signs. Many of them started to read them and walked towards the other groups of signs.

Design of Exhibition

The exhibition was organised around six themes, based upon the former analysis. Stories from the respondents were returned to the Cuvrybrache through the installation of signs on the site. These signs contained sentences and short fragments of the conversations with the temporary users (see the next photo-essay). Groups of four to six signs were distributed over the plot, their location based on the topic. Stories about the guerrilla-garden, for example, were placed in the corner of the garden. The following themes were selected:

Oasis in the city: Users experience the Cuvrybrache as a quiet place in the middle of the city. It is a place to sit down, watch the river, and dream away. The fleeting water has a relaxing effect on the users.

Lack of programming: The Cuvrybrache has no clear function in contrast to other spaces in the city. Users qualify it's not a park neither a public square. In the words of one the interviewed users: 'It's got nothing to do with all of these sort of affordances of the city.'.

Sense of freedom: Users have the feeling that they can do whatever they want to do. There is a sense of freedom that is highly appreciated. The lack of programming and the hidden nature of the area causes the sense of freedom.

Trash/traces: Trash lies around at the Cuvrybrache and remains not unnoticed by visitors. Trash indicates the temporary use of the Cuvrybrache and it influences the experience of the area. Some users even appreciate the trash, because it gives the place a wild character and shows that its 'free place'. **Graffiti:** The Cuvrybrache is both an atelier for local street artists and an open air gallery for BLU his mural paintings. The value of the Cuvrybrache for the Berlin graffiti scene must not be underestimated.

Guerrilla-garden: Hidden for most users some people started a guerrilla-garden in spring 2009. A wasteland becomes a place to grow flowers and vegetables. Experiences of gardeners and other users are presented.

Besides the signs, twenty photos were selected representing the *free place*. These photos were printed on similar boards as the text signs. Whereas the text signs returned the stories to the place, so did the photos transfer the outside inside. This collection of photos introduced the free place to the visitors, while walking upstairs different impression of the area could be seen. All in all, the combination of text and photography gave the visitors the opportunity to grasp the diverse meanings of the Cuvrybrache.

Programme

Saturday, 26th of June

- 19.00 19.45 Presentation Jan van Duppen
 During a walk on the Cuvrybrache the above themes were discussed, the signs functioned as the basis for the talk.
- 19.45 20.00 Pause
- 20.00 21.00 Discussion
 The discussion was about the value of free places, the future developments and alternative proposals. Different key-holders were invited.

- 21.00 0.00 Time to stroll around. Sunday, 27th of June
- 11.00 22.00 Gallery and Cuvrybrache open for visitors

Discussion

Different key-holders were invited for the discussion. These people represent the different perspectives on the topic:

- Bezirksbürgermeister, mayor of the neighbourhood, Dr. Franz Schulz
- TU-Berlin, Urban Planning and Sociology of Architecture, Dipl.-Ing. Arch.
 Aljoscha Hofmann
- TU-Berlin, Design and Interior Planning, Dipl.-Ing./M. Arch. Architektin MSA
 Daniela Konrad
- Spokesman of protest movement *Mediaspree Versenken!*. Carsten Joost

Due to other obligations Carsten Joost and Franz Schulz could not participate in the discussion. At the end of the presentation, a discussion arose between visitors of the exhibition, the invited academics and people that spontaneously participated. Several topics were discussed: the value of free places like the Cuvrybrache, the future of the area in respect to *Mediaspree*, and urban planning concepts for organising temporary use. Here, I want to mention some remarks that

were made.

Hofmann putted forward that the Berlin Senat begins to acknowledge the value of temporary use. They are currently busy with the development of new planning concepts that enable the management of temporary use. The Berlin urban planning department struggles with the design of planning instruments, as they need to have a democratic basis and at the same time stimulate temporary projects. They think of creating several zones at the waterfront area, these should provide space for temporary projects. A jury will then decide which projects may use the space. After some years new projects should be able to use these spaces. Someone in the audience questions the idea of planning unplanned areas, is this not a contradiction?

In addition, did Konrad reflect on the value of the river. She mentioned that human beings are naturally attracted to water. It is one of our basic needs. If we want to build sustainable cities, we should preserve enough areas along the river. She favours, therefore, the realisation of the *Uferweg* project (a footpad along the Spree), as it ensures Berlin citizens to experience the riverside. In respect to the *Uferweg*, she comments that it is very hard to realise such a project, because formal circumstances delay the process. Since the early nine-





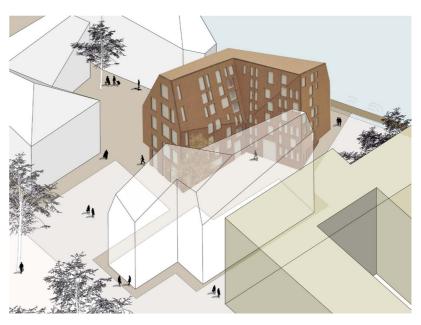


Figure 56 Blockbuster - Alternative development for the Cuvrybrache Source: Ringenier, 2009

ties this idea has been promoted, but building has not started yet. Konrad gives the example of the river, which is owned by the state. Thus, the Berlin authorities have to get permission of the national government before building can start. If all the other land owners are considered along the waterfront, one can understand the complex processes at work here.

Furthermore, an alternative plan was discussed, designed by Architectural student Hans Ringenier (TU Eindhoven). Ringenier designed a building block that fits well into Wrangelkiez both in form and function. It respects the typical Kreuzberger mix of housing and retail. He, also opened up the Innenhof structures, in order to provide more public space for the whole neighbourhood. As can be seen on the images (Figure 56), a street along the mural paintings goes directly towards the Spree, where an area to relax near the river has been added. Critique ventilated by the audience was that the project blocked the sun light for people sitting at the riverside. Moreover, it was questioned if inhabitants would appreciate the opened up Innenhöfen, because it may cause conflicts between visitors and inhabitants. However, the design was valued for fitting well into the local context. It would not form such a contrast with its direct environment as the Neue Spreespeicher would. On top of that, the plan provides an extra path towards the river and a public space near the

riverside. On the whole, it was appreciated as an interesting alternative for future developments.

Reflection

I believe that the exhibition has successfully told the stories of the temporary users to the public, it has made a plea for the value of *free places* like the Cuvrybrache. Visitors reacted surprised and interested, when they stumbled upon the signs at the wasteland. They started to read and walked further to the other signs. Immediately one of the users reacted on the intervention at the Cuvrybrache. He took his pencil and wrote a comment on one of the signs. All in all, the exhibition created a dialogue between the informal users, and between the participants of the discussion as the above report has shown. The discussion highlighted the complex nature of the subject, and it made clear that different perspectives exist. First, the difficulties in the development of planning tools were highlighted. Second, the value of the river was again underlined, and the failed attempts to realise *Uferweg* were explained. Third, Blockbuster by Riennige showed that it is possible to design alternative developments which fit better into the local context. To conclude, I am happy that I have organised this exhibition and thereby started a dialogue between research results and the public. I hope that we will keep on telling and listening to the stories of the past and the present.







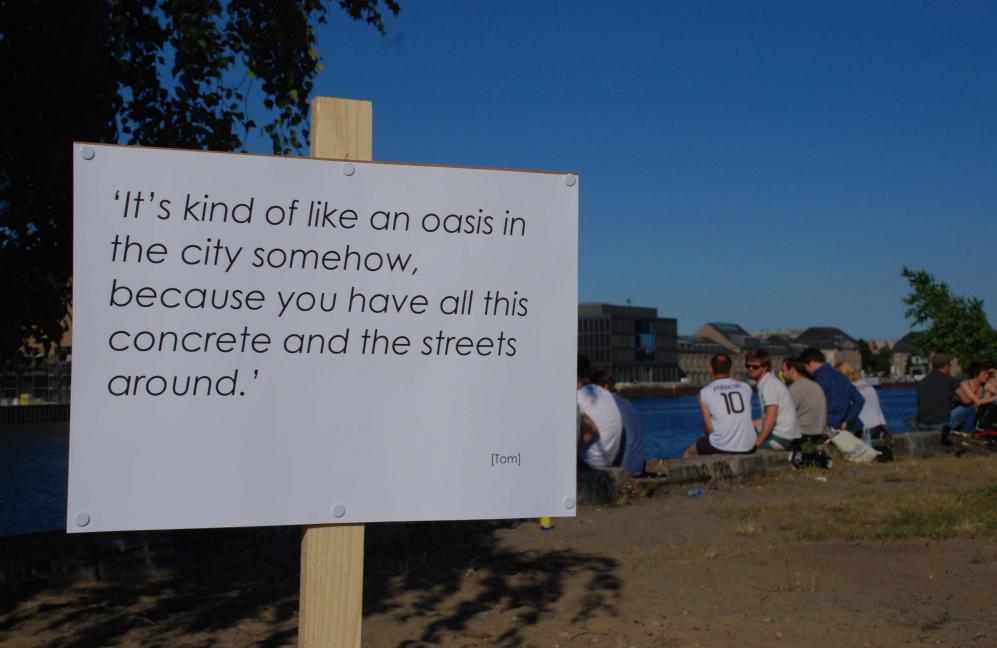
















List of references

All photos taken by author, unless noted otherwise.

Alternative tours (2010), Website of tourist organization. [Cited on 14 April 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://www.alternativeberlin.com/

Anderson, S. (2010), Conversation with 'Stacey Anderson' tourguide at 'Alternative tours Berlin' 5-03-2010

Artnet (2009), Berlin Street Fight [Cited on 20 April 2009]. Available at the World Wide Web: http://images.artnet.com/images_US/magazine/features/huttenlauch/huttenlauch11-7-1.jpg

Baarda, D.B and de Goede, M.P.M. (1997), Methoden en Technieken - Praktische handleiding voor het opzetten en uitvoeren van onderzoek, Houten: Stenfert Kroese

Bader, I. (2009), Conversation with I. Bader, DFG fellow of the Transatlantic Research Program Berlin/New York at the Center for Metropolitan Studies, 4-11-2009

Beekmans, J. (2009), MediaWharf and Media Spree: A comparative analysis. Published 17 December 2009. [Cited on 5

May 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://popupcity.net/2009/12/ mediawharf-and-mediaspree-a-comparative-analysis-part-2/

Berlin Senatsverwaltung – FIS-Broker (2010), GIS-system online from Berlin government. [Cited on 14 July 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://fbinter.stadt-berlin. de/fb/index.jsp

Berliner Zeitung (2009), Berlins Gesicht der Zukunft, Alles flieβt – von Karin Schmidl, Berliner Zeitung: 12-5-2009

Bijoux, D. and Myers, J. (2006), Interviews, solicited diaries and photography: 'new' ways of accessing everyday experiences of place, Graduate Journal of Asia-Pacific Studies, 4:1, pp. 44-64

Blu animations and other videos - notblu's Channel at Youtube (2010), Video's of Blu mural paintings. [Cited on 16 July 2010] Available on the World Wide Web: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dj_m3IaoTYg and http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RaOn1e6sLEc&feature=related

Boomkens, R. (2008), The temporalities of the public sphere. Oase 77 – Into the open, pp. 9-20

Borchardt, J. (2010) Picture taken in Berlin, July 2010

Borret, K. (1999), The Void as a productive concept for urban public space. In: GUST (Ghent Urban Studies Team) (Ed.) The Urban condition: Space, Community and the self in the Contemporary Metropolis, pp. 236-251. Rotterdam: GUST.

CAST Centrum voor Architectuur en Stedenbouw Tilburg (2008), Scheuren in de stad, [Cited on 2 December 2008]. Available at the World Wide Web: www.scheurenindestad.nl

Cochrane, A. (2006), Making up meanings in a capital city-power memory and monuments in Berlin, European Urban and Regional Studies, vol. 13 (1), pp. 5-24

Corbin, J. and Strauss, A. (2008), Basics of Qualitative Research – Techniques and Procedures for Developing Grounded Theory. Third edition. London: Sage Publications.

Corbusier (1935), La vielle Radieusse (the Radiant city). Images taken from blog. [cited on 13 July 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://iamyouasheisme.wordpress. com/2008/08/10/that-human-scale/ville_radieuse/

Crang, M. and Cook, I. (2007), Doing Ethnographies. First edition. London: Sage Publications

Cresswell, T. (1996), In Place/Out of Place: Geography, Ideology, and Transgression, University Of Minnesota Press

de Botton, A. (2009), The pleasures and sorrows of work. Phanteon Books

Diederichsen (2005), Brachenmusik – Detroit, Bronx, Manchester. pages 322-341 Chapter in Oswalt, P. (2005), Schrumpfende Städte – Band 1 Internationale Untersuchung. Hatje Cantz Verlag

Dormans, S. (2008), Narrating the city – Urban tales from Tilburg and Almere. Dissertation Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen

Doron, G.M. (2007), Dead zones, outdoor rooms and the architecture of transgression. pages 210-233 In Franck, K. A. and Stevens, Q. (2007) Loose Space. Possibility and diversity in urban life, London and New York: Routledge

Duppen, van J. (2008, 2009, 2010), Pictures taken during visits of Berlin, and while living in the city from 1 July 2009 till 31 June 2010

Edensor, T. (2007), Social practices, sensual excess and aesthetic transgression in Industrial Ruins. Pages. 234-252. In Franck, K. A. and Stevens, Q. (2007) Loose Space. Possibility and diversity in urban life, London and New York: Routledge

Flickr, Photos for social change (2010), Online Photoalbum, author unknown. [Citeon on 15 July 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://www.flickr.com/photos/jakobhuber/4790418896/sizes/o/

Florida, R. (2002), Rise of the creative class: and how it's transforming work, leisure, community and everyday life. London: Basic Books

Ford, L. R. (2000), The spaces between buildings, Baltimore [etc.]: Johns Hopkins University Press

Franck, K. A. and Stevens, Q. (2007), Loose Space. Possibility and diversity in urban life, London and New York: Routledge.

Galimberti, M. (2009), Italian Photographer Maurizio

Galimberti made Polaroid series of the Blu graffiti for his book about Berlin at Sunday 23-08-09. Available on the World Wide Web: http://www.mauriziogalimberti.it/

Ge, J. and Hokao, K. (2005), Applying the methods of image evaluation and spatial analysis to study the sound environment of urban street areas. Journal of Environmental Psychology 25. Pp. 455-466

Gornig, M. and Häussermann, H. (2002), Berlin: Economic and spatial change. European Urban and Regional Studies, vol. 9 (4), pp. 331-341

Graham, S. (2000), Constructing premium network spaces: reflections on infrastructure networks and contemporary urban development. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, pp. 183-200

Graham, S. and Healy, P. (1999), Relational concepts of space and place: Issues for planning theory and practice. European planning studies 7, 623-646

Groth, G. and Corijn, J. (2005), Reclaiming Urbanity: Indeterminate Spaces, Informal Actors and Urban Agenda setting. Urban studies, 42: 503-526 Guerillagardening.org (2010), Guerrilla garden initiatives [Cited on 20 May 2010] Available at the World Wide Web: http://guerrillagardening.org/

Gustafson, P. (2001), Meanings of place: everyday experience and theoretical conceptualizations. Journal of Environmental Psychology: 21, 5-16

Hajer, M. and Reijndorp A. (2001), Op zoek naar nieuw publiek domein (In search of a new public domain), Rotterdam: NAI

Hanke, R. A. (2010), Pictures of Cuvrybrache made when buildings were demolished made by Ralf A. Hanke.

Hannigan, J. (1998), Fantasy City: Pleasure and Profit in the Postmodern Metropolis. Routledge

Harvey, D. (1989), From Managerialism to Entrepreneurialism: The transformation in Urban Governance in Late Capitalism. In: The City Cultures Reader, Miles M. et al. London & New York: Routledge: 2000

Harvey, D. (2005), A brief history of neoliberalism, Oxford University Press Harvey, D. (2007), Space as a Keyword. In: N. Castree and D. Gregory (eds.) David Harvey: A Critical Reader. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 270-286

Haydn, F. and Temel, R. (2003), Temporäre Räume: Konzepte zur Stadtnutzung, Berlin: Birkhauser

Healy, P. (2007), Spatial imaginations and 'urban' strategies. In: P. Healy, Urban Complexity and Spatial Strategies: towards a relational planning for our times. London: Routledge, 201-234

Heebels, B. (2006), Creative clustering and the neighbourhood - Reasons for and consequences of the clustering of creative entrepreneurs in the Wrangel neighbourhood, Berlin. Master Thesis University Utrecht

Highline, the (2010), The official Web site of the High Line and Friends of the High Line. [Cited on 11 July 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://www.thehighline. org

Holtkamp, A. (2009), Conversation with A. Holtkamp, Urban planner active in Berlin, 16-12-2009

Huning, S. and Novy, J. (2006) Tourism as an Engine of Neighborhood Regeneration? - Some Remarks Towards a Better Understanding of Urban tourism beyond the 'Beaten Path', CMS Working Paper Series, No. 006-2006

IVG (2009), Geschäfstbericht 2008 [Cited on 15 December 2009]. Available at the World Wide Web: www.ivg.de

Jackson, P. (1998), Domesticating the street – the contested spaces of the high street and the mall. In: Fyfe, R., ed., Images of the Street- planning, identity and control in public space, pp. 176-191. London: Routledge

Jayne, M. (2006), Cities and consumption, Oxon: Routledge

Jessop, B. (2004), Critical Semiotic Analysis and the Critique of Political Economy. Critical Discourse Studies, 1 (1)

Joost, C. (2009) Conversation with C. Joost, Initiator of Media Spree versenken! An urban social movement in Berlin, 1-12-2009

Krätke, S. (2004), City of Talents? Berlin's Regional Economy, Socio-Spatial Fabric and `Worst Practice' Urban Governance. International Journal of Urban and Regional Research, vol. 28, pp. 511-29

LCD Soundsystem (2007), "New York, I Love You but You're Bringing Me Down", track 9 on the album Sound of Silver. Lyrics by: (Murphy, Mahoney, Pope)

Leary, M. (2009), The Production of Space through a Shrine and Vendetta in Manchester: Lefebvre's Spatial Triad and the Regeneration of a Place Renamed Castlefield. Planning Theory & Practice, Vol. 10, No. 2, pp. 189–212

Lefebvre, H. (1991), Production of Space, Oxford: Blackwell Publishing

Lefebvre, H. (2004), Rhythmanalysis – space, time and everyday life, London: Continuum

Levine, M. (2004), Government policy, the local state and gentrification – gentrification: the case of Prenzlauer berg (Berlin). Journal of Urban affairs, vol. 26 (1), pp. 89-108

Ley, D. (2003), Artists, Aestheticisation and the Field of Gentrification, Urban Studies, 40(12), pp. 2527-2544 Lonely Planet (2010), Lonely Planet Berlin – Neighbourhoods. London: Lonely Planet Publications. Lorenz, U. (2008), Brücke, Köln: Taschen

Low, S. M. (2000), On the Plaza – The politics of public space and culture, Austin: University of Texas Press

Low, S. M. and Smith, N. (2006), The politics of public space, Routledge

Manzo, L. C. (2005), For better or worse: Exploring multiple dimensions of place meaning. Journal of Environmental Psychology: 25 (2005) 67–86

Massey, D. (2005), For space, London: SAGE publications ltd.

Media Spree versenken! (2009), Neue Spreespeicher Cuvrystrasse [Cited on 10 December 2009]. Available at the World Wide Web: http://www.ms-versenken.org/website

Metz, T. (2002), Pret! Leisure en Landschap. Nai Uitgevers

Montavon, M., Steemers, K., Cheng, V. and Compagnon, R. (2006), La ville radieuse by le Corbusier once again a case study. The 23rd conference on passive and low energy archi-

tecture, Geneva Switzerland, 6-8 September 2006

MyPublicSpace (2008), Berlin. [Cited on 20 January 2010]. Available at the World Wide Web: http://www.mypublicspace.eu/content/320877/berlin

NAI Nederlands Architektuur Instituut (2008), My Public Space, Rotterdam. Leaflet of the exhibition 28.06.08-19.10.08. Available on the World Wide Web: www.nai.nl

Neue Spreespeicher (2009), Neue Spreespeicher. [Cited on 29 November 2009]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://www.neue-spreespeicher.de

New York Times (2008), One Wall Down, Thousands to Paint article written by Andreas Tzortzis. 2 March 2008 [Cited on 15 April 2010]. Avalaible on the World Wide Web: http://travel.nytimes.com/2008/03/02/travel/02headsup. html

Nielsen, T. (2002), The return of the excessive, Superfluous landscapes. Space and Culture, vol. 5 no. 1, pp 53-62

Nomadisch Grün (2010), Conversation with one of the initiators of the mobile garden project, 5-04-2010. For more infor-

mation about the project: http://prinzessinnengarten.net/

Oswalt, P. (2005), Schrumpfende Städte – Band 1 Internationale Untersuchung, Hatje Cantz Verlag

Overmeyer, K., Lange, B., Misselwitz, P., Oswalt, P., Rudolph, I., Stevens, J. and Voigt, C. (2007), Urban Pioneers – Temporary use and Urban development Berlin, Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung Berlin and jovis Verlag GmbH

ParkFiction (2010), Website of Park Fiction organization. [Cited on 18 May 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://www.parkfiction.org/

Rapp, T. (2010) Lost and Sound – Berlin, Techno and the Easyjet sound. Innervisions.

Remarque, P. (2005), Boze geesten van Berlijn, Mets & Schilts

Reynolds, R. (2008), On Guerrilla Gardening: A Handbook for Gardening Without Boundaries. USA: Bloomsburry

Reznikov, A. (2010), Relocating Home - Berlin. [Cited on 15 July 2010]. Available on the World wide web: http://asyarez-

nikov.com

Rieniets (2005), Weltweites Schrumpfen. Pages 20-33. Chapter in Oswalt, P. (2005), Schrumpfende Städte – Band 1 Internationale Untersuchung. Hatje Cantz Verlag

Ringenier, H. (2009), B(erlin)-SEITE, Blockbuster – De ,Kreuzberger Mischung' herzien. Final project of Architectural student at TU Eindhoven, 2009. For some more information see: http://www.archined.nl/reportages/archiprix-10/archiprix-2010-genomineerd-berlin-seite-blockbuster/

Rohleder, G. and Koschmieder, I. (1999), Kreuzberg: Mit Einkaufszentrum zur schnellen Mark?. MieterEcho Zeitung der Berliner MieterGemeinschaft: Augustus/September 1999

Rudolph, S. (2009), Conversation with S. Rudolph, Urban planner at Bezirksamt Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, 28-10-2009

Ruimtelijk Planbureau (2004), Tussenland, Rotterdam: NAI Uitgevers

Sassen, S. (2001), The global city, New Jersey: Princeton University Press

Scharenberg, A. and Bader, I. (2009), Berlin's waterfront site struggle. City: vol. 13, nos. 2-3, June-September 2009

Sorkin, M. (1992), Variations on a Theme park: the new american city and the end of public space, Hill and Wang

Spierings, B. (2006), Cities, consumption and competition: the image of consumerism and the making of city centres. Nijmegen: Radboud University dissertation.

Spierings, B. (2009), Doing nothing, urban decay and unfamiliar cities. [Cited on 29 January 2010]. Available at the world wide web:

Spree Garten (2009) Blog of the Spree Garten initiative. [Cited on 15 April 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://spreegarten.blogspot.com

Stadtplanungsamt (2005), Eine Ausstellung der Abteilung Stadtentwicklung und Bauen, Fachbereich Stadtplanung und Vermessung. Berlin: Bezirksamt Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg

Stahl, G. (2008), The Art of Ping Pong Country in the New Berlin. Space and Culture, vol. 11, no. 4, pp. 300-324

Stevens, Q. (2008), Why Berlin's Holocaust memorial is such a popular playground. Oase 77 – Into the Open, pp. 71-79

Swyngedouw, E., Moulaert, F., Rodriquez, A. (2002), Neoliberal urbanization in Europe: large-scale urban development projects and the new urban policy. Antipode: 34(3), 542-577

Tagesspiegel (2009), Media Spree-Gegner demonstrieren wieder – von Ralf Schönball, Der Tagesspiegel: 9-7-2009

Taz (2010), Aktionstag gegen Mediaspree - Ausufernde Party mit Botschaft, written by Svenja Bergt, 6-6-2010

Temel, R. (2003), Das Temporäre in der Stadt. In: Haydn, F. and Temel, R. (2003), Temporäre Räume: Konzepte zur Stadtnutzung, Berlin: Birkhauser

Transcriber (2009), [Cited on 1-10-2009]. Available at the world wide web: http://www.planet.dk/transscriber/

Tuan, Y. (1977), Space and Place – The perspective of experience, London: Edward Arnold (Publishers) Ltd.

Tuan, Y-F. (1991), Language and the making of place: A

narrative-descriptive approach, Annals of the Association of American Geographers, vol. 81, no. 4, pp. 684-696

Turner, R.S. (2002), The politics of design and development in the postmodern downtown. Journal of urban affairs, volume 24, number 5, pages 533-548

Twigger- Ross, C. L. and Uzzell, D. L. (1996), Place and identity processes. Journal of Environmental Psychology: 16, 205-220

Urban Explorers Network (2010), Website of Urban Explorers Network. [Cited on 12 July 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://urbanexplorers.net/

Urban Unlimited (2004), The shadow city, Rotterdam [Cited on 26 November 2008]. Available at the World Wide Web: http://www.urbanunlimited.nl/uu/uu.nsf/98/CC40F9B011F DD74286256AFD00522C2A?opendocument&l=1

Van Melik, R., van Aalst, R., van Weesep, J. (2007), Fear and Fantasy in the public domain: The development of Secured and Themed Urban Space. Journal of urban design, vol. 12, no. 1, p. 24-42

Wells, K. (2007), The material and visual cultures of cities. Space and culture, vol. 10, no. 2, pp. 136-144

Wikimedia (2010), Berlin Subdivisions [Cited on 15 July 2010]. Available on the World Wide Web: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/archive/d/d8/20100621065009!Berlin_Subdivisions.svg/2000px-Berlin_Subdivisions.svg.png

Zitty (2008), Sei dagegen – von Arne Lieb, Zitty: 14-04-2008

Zukin, S. (1998), Urban lifestyles: Diversity and Standardisation in Spaces of Consumption. Urban Studies, vol. 35, nos. 5-6, pp. 825-839

ABSTRACT

Berlin contains many wastelands, which are often conceived of as true waste by urban planners and real estate developers. In their opinion, these spaces just wait for future developments. Berlin citizens, however, create meaningful places out of these abandoned spaces. The Cuvrybrache, well-known for the Blu mural paintings, is such a meaningful place. This research reveals the diverse meanings of the wasteland through a mix of research methods: observations, interviews, and photography. One of the current users rightly typified the area as a playground for grown-ups. It is a site to hang out with friends, barbecue, spray graffiti, start a guerrillagarden, take the dog for a walk or just look at the river and dream away. This spontaneous temporary use is possible, because the wasteland has been lacking programming for the last twelve years. Analysis of conversations show that the temporary users value the wasteland as a free place, while it offers opportunities for diverse activities, contains alternative aesthetics, provides space to subcultures and, most importantly, functions as a hang-out area near the river. Informal users have created a meaningful place that contributes to the liveability and diversity of the city. This socio-cultural value conflicts with the economic value of the Cuvrybrache as the land owner aims to realise offices, lofts and a hotel. Current temporary use is, thus, threatened by future developments, which are part of the neoliberal waterfront redevelopment plan Mediaspree.



JAN VAN DUPPEN Urban Geography University Utrecht