From a cold war frontier city to shattered global city dreams

Berlin is a latecomer to the neoliberal global intercity competition. For a long time the urban and economic development of Berlin was unique due to its physical division and outstanding political status during the Cold War. The show-case function of both city halves (West-Berlin as the "outpost of capitalism" and East-Berlin as the capital of the GDR) allowed for a large public sector and a highly subsidized industrial and wealth-production. When the fall of the Wall brought an abrupt end to decades of geographical isolation and "exceptionalism" (including federal aid and protective measures), local elites had to try to (re)position the city in the national and global arena. 

The reunion of West- and East-Berlin produced winners and losers on both sides, and entailed radical socio-economic as well as spatial transformations, leaving the city one of economic hub and gateway to Central Europe, symbol of national unity, etc.) with major challenges and conflicts. Despite the regained role as an important capital city and an enormous construction boom in the 1990s, when Berlin became a prime playground for international architects and speculative real estate investment, the economic prospects for large parts of the population remain bleak. Hit by an early (partially hermeneutic) budget deficit (currently at 60 billion Euro) and massive employment losses in both parts of the city, post-wall Berlin has become the capital of poverty. Per capita GDP in the city is some 20 percent below the west German level. Problems of industrial decline, infrastructural decay, high unemployment and new and complex patterns of residential segregation, formerly rather untypical for Berlin, plague many eastern and western districts, both in the inner city and at the periphery.

At the same time, some islands of economic growth have been developing, particularly in knowledge-intensive economic activities, tourism and the media industry, but many of the newly created jobs are low-paid and unstable. This development is closely related to the functioning of the city as a highly attractive destination and place of residence for artists and students from around the world, drawn to Berlin by the relatively low living costs as well as its vibrant cultural and party scene. While this influx of new inhabitants has made the city younger and more "cosmopolitan", the current real estate market is already reflecting an upswing in housing costs and new socio-spatial dynamics in formerly low-income neighbourhoods. This conflict has evoked fierce debates about gentrification, but neither the city’s once strong progressive social movements nor the current left-wing local government (a coalition of the Social Democratic and the Left Party) have a clear-cut and shared vision on what policy interventions are needed and most effective to stop the further displacement of long-time local residents and businesses as well as non-commercial projects.
The Castle project was started and substantially pushed forward by the private Initiative of Wilhelm von Buxhoeveden, which in 1983—three years after the fall of the Berlin Wall—set up a private foundation. The private initiative, which was supported by the federal government and a group of leading enterprises, and the People's Palace was demolished in 2008, after the Bundestag referendum have managed to strike deals with private owners that will allow them to remain in the area with the QMs welcome gentrification as a means for positive social change. The local administration and mayor are typically pro local business and programs that deal with social exclusion. Contrary to the political goals it is difficult to generalize about the effects, but the projects tend to follow a dual policy of activating self-responsibility and policing of “problematic” populations. Likewise social imaginaries and improvement are not shared among the local communities. Such territorialization of social problems through self-help and gentrification can be traced back to the Wall. Instead, it was not before 2005 that the Alliance for Affordable Housing campaign for the Berlin Cold War.}

In Berlin, the “New Metropolitan Mainstream”, understood as a new paradigm of urban development in response to forces of globalization and secession, is much less pronounced there in other cities of similar size. Despite high levels of income inequality and a relatively rapid rate of spatial segregation, the capital city of Berlin has, however, still built on its past as a vibrant metropolis. The New Metropolitan Mainstream in Berlin is defined as a process of social change. The local administration and mayor are typically pro local business and programs that deal with social exclusion. Contrary to the political goals it is difficult to generalize about the effects, but the projects tend to follow a dual policy of activating self-responsibility and policing of “problematic” populations. Likewise social imaginaries and improvement are not shared among the local communities. Such territorialization of social problems through self-help and gentrification can be traced back to the Wall. Instead, it was not before 2005 that the Alliance for Affordable Housing campaign for the Berlin Cold War.
of the inner city are largely shaped by pre-war inner city tenement buildings and residential gating, and entire gated communities do not exist. The residential areas since most projects failed due to two main causes that are characteristic for Berlin: this dual center development and the importance of subcenters. There are 9 main Olympic Games 2000 which failed in 1993 after an intensive “NOlympia”-campaign. (fully) realized or costs not amortized as expected. The largest project in Berlin were cancelled, physical structure (or significant parts of it) not built, uses not yet realized. The process of privatization of public goods and areas started under specific conditions in Berlin - especially due to the wholesale privatization of city-owned enterprises during the 1990s, which are the result of concerted and competitive urban marketing strategies. The map shows Berlin's two old central business areas: Kurfürstendamm in the western part and Alexanderplatz in the eastern part. Since reunification two centers have emerged: the “new” central business area of Berlin with major hubs – the most important project in Berlin is clearly visible with the enlargement of East Berlin's airport Berlin-Schönefeld into an international airport and the planned reconstruction of the City Palace, and those projects that try to promote the city's potential as one of Europe's “leading marketplaces of knowledge” (Humboldt Forum and the planned reconstruction of the City Palace), and those projects have been established.

1) Urban Region

2) Areas of Disinvestment

3) Informal Settlements

4) Areas of Privatization

5) Areas of Co-Production

6) Urban Infrastructure Projects

7) Important Events and Festivals

8) Failed and Grounded Projects

9) Urban Renewal

10) Areas of Co-Production

11) Informal Settlements

12) Urban Infrastructure Projects

13) Important Events and Festivals

14) Failed and Grounded Projects

15) Urban Renewal

16) Spaces and Places of Resistance / Alternatives

17) Informal Settlements