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| Switzerland  | 41'000Km2 | * Inhabitants | 7'500'000 |
| Urban Region | 530Km2    | * Inhabitants | 340'000   |

Small Town – Big Ambitions

The city of Berne is the political capital (federal city) of Switzerland. The city is also the political capital of the Canton of Berne and heart of its economically most important agglomeration. Berne is thus the focus of national, cantonal and local politics at the same time. These politics have differing agendas emerging in controversial perceptions and political definitions of the various urban areas of the city. Direct impact is obvious in the city's appearance. Attempts to position Berne internationally collide with local interests and traditions.

In Switzerland spatial identities must be seen on a relatively small scale. The core area of the city of Berne is constituted by the municipality (cf. map municipal boundaries) with 130'000 inhabitants. But as Berne offers ca. 153'000 jobs it is the Berne agglomeration which is characterising the urban region in its totality. The agglomeration consists of some 40 municipalities with a growing number of 340'000 inhabitants. These surrounding municipalities are associated to Berne by compensatory payments for infrastructures and institutions provided mostly by the city (eg. cultural contributions). This fact also adds up to the perception of the population of belonging to one urban region (cf. map perceived urban region). The Berne agglomeration itself is surrounded by a circle of smaller cities, all lying in a commuting distance of ca. 30 minutes: Thun, Biel, Burgdorf, Fribourg, Solothurn. The latter two of them are even the capitals of two neighbouring cantons. Despite this larger economic urban region (cf. map) the Canton of Berne is of minor economic importance compared to other regions in Switzerland. There are only a few industrial enterprises or service companies being worth mentioning and there are also no international transport connections of importance (airport). This outline of facts can be interpreted as being responsible for the basic problems of the city of Berne and its urban region, being in fact a small town

jammed in between the two large and striving metropolitan areas of Arc Lémanique (private banking, nutrition companies and international organisations in Geneva and Lausanne) and the economic zone of Zurich, Zug and Basle (finance, insurance, commodity trade, pharmaceuticals and IT services). But, being the focus of federal politics, Berne has nevertheless gained a status of national and international importance in contrast to comparable cities in Switzerland whose influence doesn't surpass regional level. Inspite of its inferior economic relevance Berne is a place of outstanding cultural activities, regularly hosts important national and international events and above all is the focus of local, national and international political controversies.

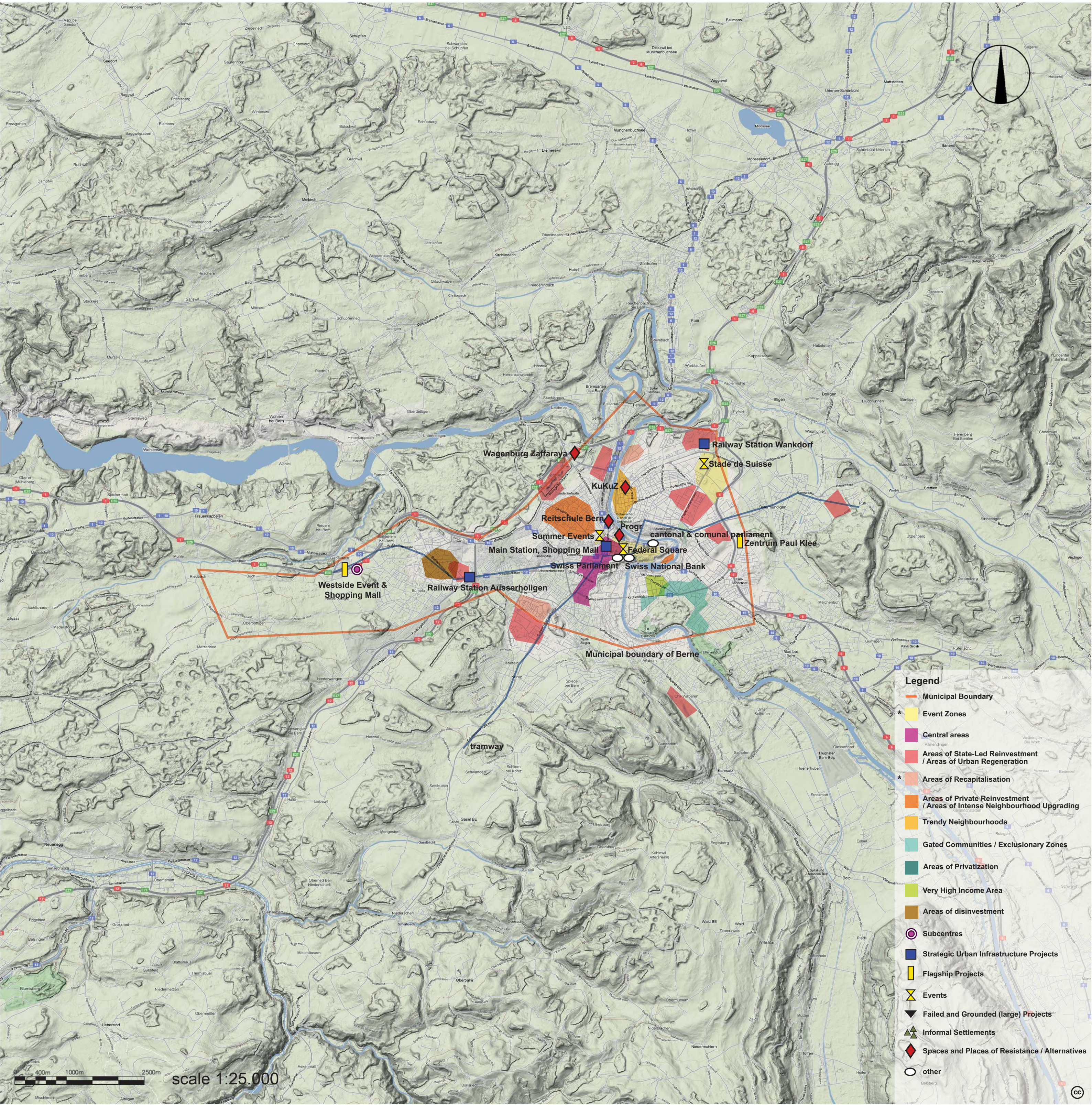
The coalition of Social Democrats and Green Parties, governing Berne since 1991, has been trying to position the city in competition with the other metropolitan areas. The first such project started in the early 1990s and was labelled „Espace Mitteland“. It was the attempt to artificially forge a coalition of the neighbouring cantons of Berne, Fribourg, Solothurn and Jura into an independant economic zone and a metropolitan area. Berne was defined as the key player in an initiative of clustering innovative economic sectors (eg. medical technology) to provide the region with novel importance. This effort with a mainly economic bias was abandoned in 2006 and must be judged a failed project.

In order to not fall out of the federal program of subsidies, being paid to cities with noteworthy international presence, Berne has started a new attempt in 2008 to upgrade the Berne area with the new label „Hauptstadregion“(cf. map capital region). This term comprises the cantons of Berne, Fribourg, Solothurn, Neuchâtel and additionally the upper half of Valais and now aims less at economic power but emphasizes the importance and responsibility of Berne as the key player in local, regional, national and international

politics. The new strategy tries to break the dominant position of the metropolitan areas, who are defined along categories of economic power and net product. Thus Berne claims in a quasi hegemonial manner to be entitled to play the role of the political centre on a regional and national level likewise. This concept manifests itself for example in the demand that every public debate of national importance organised by the national TV channel should be registered in and broadcast from Berne and not from Zurich, the seat of Swiss TV. Another example on the regional level is the request to neighbouring cities to co-finance the expansion of Berne's main station and downsize their own railway stations at the same time, a proposition offered to Fribourg. The strategical paradigm change has direct impacts on Berne's urban area. To gain international presence image oriented events, projects and objects have become important. This means that processes following the logics of the New Metropolitan Mainstream are increasingly reflected in questions of design, use and availability of public spaces. This manifests itself in the status given to the architecture of flagship projects, in the evaluation of cultural institutions worthy of support, but also in the political discourse on otherness and subculture.

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Map and poster are based on discussions lead in the „Arbeitsgruppe Wohnen“, an independant coalition of self-governing housing cooperatives in Berne





|                      | Subcenter:<br>Westside   |
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| <b>Purpose</b>       | Creation of a modern subcentre of supraregional radiance by means of a flagship project beyond the boundaries of the old town, accompanied by new low priced housing for the middle classes. The bad reputation of Berne's western area, because of being an area of former working class housing and tower buildings, should be improved. |
| <b>Dimensions</b>    | A new city district "Brünnen" with 2600 inhabitants, houses retirement home. The centre of the district is the new shopping mall and urban entertainment centre "Westside" (141'000m2) with multiplex cinemas, restaurants etc. A new railway station, a new tram route and a junction to the motorway.                                    |
| <b>Projets costs</b> | 360 Mio Euro   |
| <b>Investors</b>     | Migros (Switzerland's largest retailer), shopping mall. City of Berne, owner of 45% of the building land, housing areas  |
| <b>Architects</b>    | Daniel Libeskind, shopping mall<br>open competition, housing areas   |



Description / Reason for this choice / Background / context

Berne's western districts are notorious for having a high percentage of inhabitants with migratory background. The region was early targeted to be a possible object for the expansion of the city. Many projects were abandoned because of the costs. The project of the shopping mall "Westside", designed as a roofing of the motorway, brought the breakthrough.

Significance for New Metropolitan Mainstream

At the beginning of the history of "Westside-Brünnen" stands not only the project as such but especially the project in its form, its design as a flagship project. The private investor Migros and the City consider star architect Libeskind likewise to be a guarantor for the successful commercial development of the location and of the brand Migros. The logics of private-public partnerships, in Switzerland usually applied for cultural projects, are increasingly welcomed for commercial projects (cf. Potsdamer Platz in Berlin) and directly for projects of urban development.



Stakeholders and their interests

Migros: Re-positioning of the brand against the background of the opening of the Swiss markets for competitors from the EU. City of Berne: a) valorisation of the city's largest reserves of building land; b) improvement of a neglected area with a negative reputation

Deals

The private investor finances the roofing of the motorway, which is the key factor for the successful expansion of the city (noise protection, living quality). The city supports the project on all levels and provides the necessary infrastructures from public funds.

Impacts

Competition for the old town: Switzerland already has a 25% abundance of selling spaces. The new shopping malls on the outskirts of the cities (eg. Sihlcity in Zurich or Shoppyland in Berne) are not only competing themselves but also the traditional shopping districts of the town centres. The opening of the mutliplex cinemas in "Westside" has lead to a closing of cinema halls in Berne by 15% in only 2 years. Valorisation of the housing area: Contrary to the flagship project "Klee Zentrum" in the east of Berne with the adjoining upper class housing area "Schönburg-Ost", the municipality itself is profiting from the project "Westside-Brünnen" as a land owner. The urban expansion is of benefit for a section of the population for which the authorities so far have not promoted housing projects. But "Westside" still is fighting against its ambivalent reputation – the development of the housing area is only progressing slowly.

|  | „Reitschule“<br>(autonomous sociocultural centre) |
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| <b>Purpose</b>       | Self-governing/autonomous centre<br>Venue of extra-parliamentary politics and subculture  |
| <b>Dimensions</b>    | Biggest venue in Berne with 1-3 thousand visitors weekly. Centrally located close to main railway station. Hosts cinema, info centre, 2 bars, restaurant, shared flats, print shop, carpenter's workshop, 3 concert halls, women-only cultural spaces, offices of politically active groups, etc. |
| <b>Projets costs</b> | Investments by the occupying groups since 1987 more than 2 Mio Euro. Measures of renovation by municipality (1999-2004) ca. 8 Mio Euro  |
| <b>Investors</b>     | Individual initiative of the occupants, City of Berne   |
| <b>Subsidies</b>     | Annual running costs by municipality of 70'000 Euro, covering 85% of the rent to be paid back to municipality. Cultural subsidies are granted only if applied for in relation to specific projects.   |
| <b>Architecture</b>  | Built in 1887 as a riding school, since 1960's practically abandoned and treated as property to be demolished, but since 1988 the whole complex is protected as a historic monument.  |



Description / Reason for this choice / Background / context

In 1981 "Reitschule" served for the first time as an autonomous cultural centre. Eviction after one year with subsequent permanent police surveillance. 1987 after several attempts and massive demonstrations again successfully squatted and finally tolerated by authorities. After popular vote in favour of „Reitschule“ in 1999 first renovation measures. 2005 first use and occupation contract between occupants and authorities. Organisation: Self-government along consensus principles, around 80 persons are involved with daily routines in several working groups, biggest and oldest project of this kind in Switzerland (for more info cf. www.reitschule.ch)

Significance for New Metropolitan Mainstream

The „Reitschule“ is one of the most important subcultural venues in Switzerland. Many by now famous artists/bands etc. had their first performances on its stages and are now serving NMM interests. On the other hand the Reitschule is a starting point of protest movements (eg. Reclaim the Streets, anti-WTO-movement etc.). As such it is the city's constant 'problem child', because the city's image is endangered by local and national protests and riots originating from or centring around the „Reitschule“.

Stakeholders and their interests

Self-governing occupants, creative artists, City of Berne, independant groups (eg. adolescents, who encounter an autonomous experimental space), leftist political groups. But also conservative or right-wing groups, who are profiling themselves with initiatives against the „Reitschule“.

Deals

Use and occupation contract with subsidies which cover 85% of the rent, but no general subsidies for cultural activities. No exertion of political influence from the outside, but establishment of a ‚red telephone line‘ to police authorities in case of severe conflicts.

Impacts

The self-government and the cultural-political identy of the „Reitschule“ are starting points and organisational centres of many local and national political protest movements. Its rooms for events, the print shop, the monthly magazine (published since 23 years) etc. are instruments to support and keep running political initiatives over longer periods. But still, after 23 years of existence, the „Reitschule“ is not yet fully recognised by the red-green parties ruling local government. Contrary to Geneva („usine“) and Zurich („Rote Fabrik“) subsidies are minimal – this, at the same time, is part of the self-image of the "Reitschule" as being a bastion against state mainstream culture or a constrained autonomy. On the other hand the level of political conflicts is at the maximum. Conservative and right-wing forces keep up a permanent political pressure. So far 4 initiatives have been warded off by public vote demanding the closing and demolition of the „Reitschule“. The 5th such attempt is due on September 26th, 2010, which proposes to sell the building to the highest bidder.

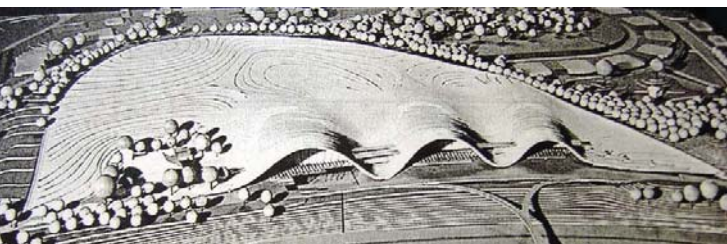
|  | Flagship Project:<br>Zentrum Paul Klee ZPK |
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| <b>Purpose</b>       | Establish the internationally leading centre of competence on the artist Paul Klee based on the world's largest single collection of his artworks.  |
| <b>Dimensions</b>    | 3 wave-like connected buildings (exhibitions, studios, research facilities, conference and theatre halls), 1750m2.                                  |
| <b>Projets costs</b> | Building: 82 Mio Euro (paid by donor Maurice E. Müller)<br>Annual running costs: 7.5 Mio Euro, 4 Mio of it paid by municipality and canton of Berne |
| <b>Investors</b>     | Paul Klee Foundation, City of Berne   |
| <b>Architects</b>    | Renzo Piano   |



Description / Reason for this choice / Background / context

The artist Paul Klee is regarded as a „son of the city of Berne“. In 1997 his heirs dedicate their collections of artworks to the city and canton of Berne under the condition that a Paul Klee museum be built. The offer is accepted as Berne at that time does not have a nationally or internationally renowned art museum like Basle or Zurich. Various projects are being discussed when multimillionaire Maurice E. Müller (medical technology) enters the scene. He offers to donate the museum building and the land under the condition (again) that he decides on the location (ground he owns on the outskirts of the city) and the museum be designed by his friend Renzo Piano without architectural competition. The authorities, backed by a positive public vote, accept and the ZPK is built and opened in 2006.



Significance for New Metropolitan Mainstream

The ZPK could probably count as a project which embodies more than anything else the logics of the New Metropolitan Mainstream. From the point of view of its architecture it is a solitary building designed by a star architect. From the point of view of the art system it houses the world's largest collection of artworks by Paul Klee. The combination of stardom (architect and artist) enters into direct competition with similar projects in close vicinity, eg. the Vitra museum by Frank Gehry in Weil, the KKL in Lucerne by Jean Nouvel, the Tinguely museum by Mario Botta or the Schaulager by Herzog & de Meuron in Basle. Having the mythic Guggenheim/Bilbao effect in mind, Berne hopes to improve its position in a national and international context.

Stakeholders and their interests

A local donor and collector erects his own memorial with public support. City authorities believe to have found a low-cost solution for the image problem and are waiting for the effects of the flagship project.

Deals

City accepts conditions of donor (building costs, part of the Klee collection, choice of architect). City and canton of Berne finance new infrastructure (public transport facilities) and annual running costs. Several usually emphasised principles are ignored by the authorities, eg. promotion of architecture by open competitions.

Impacts

Thanks to the image of the new museum and the costly expansion of the public transport system to the ZPK, the nearby area of Schönburg-Ost (a former agricultural zone) s currently being transformed into a very pricy, exclusively up-market new neighbourhood, partly designed by the architect Kollhoff. The area is owned by the Burgergemeinde, the aristocratic municipality from pre-revolutionary times and still existing as a wealthy corporation. The corporation is the biggest landowner of the city and Berne's most influential non-governmental body gaining from public investments in this area. The long-term financing of the running costs of the ZPK is not guaranteed yet. The cultural budget of the city and the canton is strained one-sidedly as the overall budget has not been increased. The ZPK is financed at the cost of other institutions and initiatives. The number of visitors has been cut in half since 2006 and the ZPK is still seeking its profile in competition with other regional and national museums. The flagship threatens to become a bottomless pit financially.

|  | Event:<br>„Bundesplatz“<br>(‘federal square’ in the old town) |
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| <b>Purpose</b>       | Representative space in front of the federal parliament building, framed also by the buildings of four Swiss banks, eg. the National Bank of Switzerland. Considered to be a multi-functional piazza for the old town. |
| <b>Dimensions</b>    | Redesigned in 2004, the "Bundesplatz" is the largest square in Berne's old town (30x60m). It is part of the Unesco World Heritage of the old town of Berne.  |
| <b>Projets costs</b> | ca. 6 Mio Euro   |
| <b>Investors</b>     | Swiss Federation, City of Berne  |
| <b>Architects</b>    | Federal Office for Buildings, Aebi&Vincent (Berne)   |



Description / Reason for this choice / Background / context

The "Bundesplatz" has traditionally been the location for a weekly market of the farmers of the region. At the same time it has also been the main site of local, national and international rallies. But most of the time the square was used as a parking lot until 2002.

In the course of the renovation of the parliament building the square was redesigned between 2002 and 2004 with the goal of providing a multi-functional public space. As such, the square now is much more integrated into the concept of the commercial exploitation of the old town.

Significance for New Metropolitan Mainstream

The removal of the parking lot provides the City of Berne with a large, central and multi-functional square. The 'play of water'/ fountain has become a crowd puller for the population. The dimensions of the square and its proximity to the old town have also turned it into an interesting site for commercial events of national and international relevance. Thus the just "new-found" public square is increasingly deprived of its public use.



Stakeholders and their interests

Federal authorities: In its new design the "Bundesplatz" is seen as the states 'visiting card' qualified for political receptions of foreign representatives. The "Bundesplatz", the Federal Parliament and Government Building and the top class Hotel Bellevue, where foreign visiting representatives mostly reside, are in close vicinity. City of Berne: Berne has its own 'visiting card' through the frequent events being covered by the media.

Deals

The open design of the square allows an open picnic area like atmosphere in the day-to-day life of the city. At the same time it is the most rigorously monitored place of the city, which can be cordoned off by crowd control barriers on short notice. On the occasion of state visits (eg. China) the square is inaccessible – rather for reasons of image than security.

Impacts

The "Bundesplatz" has lost its former negatively connoted use (parking lot, site of violent riots). This fact has improved its 'exchange value' for public relation events of the city and of private sponsors, which directly competes with its use as a site of issue related political manifestations. Consequently all sorts of political manifestations in the old town have been challenged. The prohibition of demonstrations during the opening hours of shops is being discussed. The multi-functional and commercialized use has indirectly influenced the public perception of rallies on the event-space "Bundesplatz", regardless of presented topics.

## Synthesis over all four projects and outlook

In close cooperation with surrounding cities and municipalities of the urban and capital region, Berne positions itself today increasingly as the centre of (inter) national, regional and local politics. To visitors from all round the world Berne is advertised as a singular historic world of experience (UNESCO World Heritage) where security and cleanliness are of utmost importance. Berne defines itself as attractive capital region keeping up with times. "Westside", ZPK and the revaluation of the old town are symbols of the efforts to establish this new image of the capital via the trappings of the New Metropolitan Mainstream. Thus Berne accordingly pursues commercialisation and city marketing by means of international star architects, the art system and the event industry. Regarding the ZPK this strategy seems to be successful. The provenance of the visitors indicates that the ZPK serves as a flagship of international radiance – but, the necessary steady stream of visitors from Switzerland is

missing. Economically speaking, the ZPK is a failure. The same verdict looms over "Westside". Neither the targeted number of visitors in the urban entertainment and shopping centre, nor its role as a focal point of a suburban centre with new housing have so far been accomplished. One thing however is certain: ZPK and "Westside" are both projects "to big to fail" for the city of Berne and for the private investors. The image of the capital region, promoted worldwide, is at stake. Thus the city highly subsidises such new projects that are not only in direct competition to its own local older assets in the old town and the region but that are at the same time competing themselves. The policy of image building inflicts also damage on public space. The availability of publicly accessible space is increasingly restricted, especially in the shopping areas of the old town area and the central station. People not matching the desired image of the capital are edged off or even ordered away.

Resistance to those developments mainly comes from subcultural institutions and affiliated political groups. Ironically not only political controversies (e.g. policy of use of public space), but also financial constraints (meagre subsidies) are jointly responsible to foster concepts of autonomy in institutions like e.g. the "Reitschule" and forge them into places of resistance. The "Reitschule" even coquets with the image of being a stain on the reputation of the city, which is a rallying cry for the conservatives against the project. Like this the "Reitschule" takes a stand against the restructuring of the city and its intended image, and is in fact an antagonist of the new metropolitan mainstream. Nevertheless, as one of the most important sub-cultural venues it is also playing the role of co-producer of up-coming cultural trends serving the new metropolitan mainstream. The fact that the "Reitschule" was able to stay aloof of opposing political trends so far is less due to its stable political standpoint, but more to its advance cultural achievements. A better part of Berne's

population under the age of 45 has been profiting from the cultural offers at least once. Such facts partially explain why the "Reitschule" despite its role as "enfant terrible" and its speckling of the capital's perfect picture, up to now could count on the goodwill of a narrow majority of Berne's local electors. All in all it shows that the new metropolitan mainstream is constitutive for the declared capital region (Hauptstadtregion) of Berne. The lack of economical power is specifically encouraging a culture and image oriented strategy. The city's policy is caught between symbolic and highly remunerated projects of (inter) national importance and the immediate needs of the population. The enormous investments in flagship projects reveal how strongly the logics of the new metropolitan mainstream are influencing the stakeholders of Berne's urban region. It is also evident how local politicians have fallen for the lure of the new metropolitan mainstream and abstain from searching for alternatives.