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 economi-
cally most important agglomeration. Berne is thus the focus of national, cantonal and local politics at the same time. These political themes differing 
are emerging in crosscutting perceptions and political definitions of the various urban areas of the city. Direct impact is obvious in the city's ap-
ppearance. Attempts to position Berne internationally collide with local interests and traditions.

In Switzerland special cities must be seen on a relatively small scale. The core area of the city of Berne is constituted by the municipality (cf. map) 
entirely surrounded by a circle of smaller cities, all lying in a commuting distance of 
c. 30 minutes: Thun, Biel, Burgdorf, Fribourg, Solothurn. The latter two of
are even the capitals of two neighbouring cantons. Despite this larger 
number of inhabitants, the Canton of Berne is of minor econom-
ies with noteworthy international presence, Berne has started a new attempt 
failed project.

The coalition of Social Democrats and Green Parties, governing Berne since 
1991, has been trying to position the city in competition with the other met-
copolitan centres (cf. map capital region). This term comprises the cantons of Berne, Fribourg, Solothurn and parts of 
phased out. 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.

To not fall out of the federal program of subsidies, being part of 
otherness in the architecture of flagship projects, in the mediation of cultural 
products and in the political discourse on utensils and subsidies.

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Map and poster are based on discussions lead in the "Arbeitsgruppe Wohn-
en", an independent coalition of self-governing housing cooperatives in 
Berne, Switzerland

Small Town – Big Ambitions

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Berner's western districts are notorious for having a high percentage of inhabitants with migratory background. The region is known for being multicultural and cosmopolitan. Many projects were abandoned because of the costs. The project of the shopping mall “Westside”, designed as a flagship project, was able to stay aloof of opposing political trends so far and has been able to serve as a flagship of international architecture – but, the necessary steady stream of visitors from Switzerland is missing. Economically speaking, the ZPK is a failure.

In 2011 “Reitschule” served the first time as an autonomous cultural centre. Evolution after one year with subsequent proud permanent presence. 1987 after several attempts and massive demonstrations against it successfully equated and finally tolerated by authorities. After popular vote in favour of “Reitschule” in 1999 first formal recognition. 2005 first use and occupation control between occupants and authorities. Organization: Self-governed along consensus principles, around 80 persons are involved with daily routine in seven working groups, biggest and oldest project of this kind in Switzerland (for more info: www.reitschule.ch).

The “Reitschule” is one of the most important suburban venues in Switzerland. Many by now astonished amateurs have had their first performances on its stages and are now serving NBBM interests. On the other hand the Reitschule is a starting point of protest movements (e.g. Reclaim the Streets, anti-WTO movement etc.). As such it is the only “problem child”, because the city’s image is endangered by local and national protests and riots originating from or centering around the Reitschule.

Deals
Use and occupation contract with subsidiser which covers 80% of the rent, but no general subsidies for cultural activities. No subsidies for people coming from the suburb and a telephone line to police authorities in case of severe conflicts.

Impacts
The self-government and cultural identity of the locality, the “Reitschule” is a starting point of protest movements and local and national political protest movements. Its rooms for performances and events are being used since 1987 (published since 23 years) etc. are instruments to support and keep public opinion. Even after 20 years of existence, the “Reitschule” is not yet fully recognised by the public as permanent cultural building or as a political platform. But also conservatories or right-wing groups, who are profiling themselves with initiatives against the “Reitschule”.

Stakeholders and their interests
Self-governing occupants, creative artists, City of Bern, independent groups (e.g. adocasten, who encounter an autonomous experimental space), local political groups. But also conservatories or right-wing groups, who are profiling themselves with initiatives against the “Reitschule”.

Deals
City accepts condition of building (buildings, part of the Klee collection, advice, City and canton of Bern finance infrastructural transport facilities) and annual running costs. Several usually emphasised principles are ignored by the authorities, e.g. promotion of architecture by open competitions.

Impacts
Thanks to the image of the new museum and the cosy expanded public transport system to the ZPK, the nearby area is becoming an area with a high degree of urban development. It is being transformed into a very pretty, explicitly upmarket residential area, but also a cool student area. The area is owned by the Bürgergemeinde, the cantonal museum, the canton of Bern, the Science Museum/Bern, the Swiss National Bank, the „Zentrum Paul Klee ZPK“ and the „Reitschule“ as being a bastion against state mainstream cultural policies. Of the 80 members of the “Reitschule” only 9 are from the “Reitschule” as being a bastion against state mainstream cultural policies. Of the 80 members of the “Reitschule” only 9 are from the city and national government. The building is the most rigorously monitored place of the city, which can be closed by the police at any time. The area is a site of issue related political manifestations. Consequently the area is in close vicinity.

The open design of the square allows an open picnic area like in the day-to-day life of the city. At the same time it is a site of issue related political manifestations. The area is in close vicinity.

Stakeholders and their interests
Federal authorities in its new design the “Bundesplatz” is even the states’ “visiting card” for political receptions on occasion of state visits. E.g. “Potsdamer Platz”, the Federal Parliament and Government Building and the top class Hotel “Bellevue” in Geneva (on the GOP’s wish list) are designed by star architects, which directly competes with its use as symbolic and highly remunerated projects of (inter) national importance and the immediate needs of the Federal authorities. Nevertheless, as one of the most important flagships of the New Metropolitan Mainstream, the “Bundesplatz” has probably the highest degree of skepticism and resistance towards the concept of the commercial exploitation of the old town.

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