From Wettbewerbe to Quartiersmanagement: Lessons Learned from German Urban Planning Policy

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Introduction: *Wettbewerbe*

Twenty to-scale neighborhood models sat in front of a long stretch of windows, each depicting several blocks of high-rise residential buildings, parks and streets. On some models, the buildings edged up to the street frontage, creating blocks with large greens hidden inside interior courtyards. In others, new green spaces flanked the main road – whether in the form of a landscaped median, a formal square or smaller pocket parks. I loved admiring the craftsmanship of the models and their different ways of presenting the concepts, whether in terms of materials, color schemes or representations of landscape and trees. But most interesting of all was examining the design concepts each sought to convey.

At 9am that morning, any of the twenty models could have represented the future of the site in Pankow, a northeastern district of Berlin. However, by 6pm, a plan for the site and a designer would be selected. The 31-hectare area held 25 existing buildings, mostly prefabricated concrete apartment blocks colloquially known as *Plattenbauen.* The proposals introduced methods to construct additional high-density buildings on site while improving the overall public space and block structure – and in many cases, shielding the now-dreary existing buildings from immediate street view. The concepts took vastly different approaches to achieving these measures, ranging from implementing a traditional courtyard-style block system to punctuating a strip with tall, showcase buildings (*Höhepunkte*) to following a broad and seemingly neoclassical axis.

Each model represented one architect's vision and corresponding entry into the Berlin Senate Design *Wettbewerb* (Competition). At the competition, a panel comprising a majority of practitioners and minority of members of the city administration would study the design concepts, debate their merits and ultimately select one winner and three finalists. To reach this point, the jury might need anywhere from 6 to 12 hours, intensively examining the design proposals and debating which solution would best serve the current community, future residents and the city as a whole. Each entry had also been independently costed, meaning that likely building costs would enter into the discussion along with design ideals. The process would require several rounds, from a rapid-fire first round eliminating unlikely candidates to lengthy final rounds, deliberating over the details of the final five or six entries. I observed some *Wettbewerbe* where there was immediate consensus on the best design proposal. In others, members of the jury argued passionately until reaching consensus, or at least a majority. Once the jury selected a winner, the identity of the firm would be revealed and it would then receive the opportunity to proceed with the project.

It was fascinating to observe this process as an American practitioner. In my time managing large-scale urban planning initiatives, I had come across a few public Design Competitions, but only in the case of extremely high profile or public interest projects. For example, the post-Sandy crisis galvanized the national "Rebuild by Design" competition, and competitions selected architects for nationally important memorials such as the 9/11 Memorial and the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial. However, in Germany, city administrations select the designers for almost every public sector-led building or urban planning project using competitions, from large-scale urban design initiatives to local buildings such as schools or sports halls. The number of decisions made this way is also far higher than in the U.S. because German public sector organizations initiate more development projects and cast a wider planning and design influence policy-wise than their American counterparts.

The *Wettbewerb* process has a number of benefits and drawbacks for both city administrations and design practitioners. First, the system is completely anonymous, enabling new practitioners to break into a competitive market. Commissioning a *Wettbewerb* also allows a city administration to see a wide range of design concepts for any one site, encouraging innovation and rewarding good design. Finally, the use of a practitioner-led jury brings the community of designers into the city's decision-making process, creating transparency and engendering more support for the city's procurement decisions. However, the system is problematic in that it is extremely time consuming for both the public sector and for practitioners, who are forced to generate detailed design concepts to win public work. Indeed, as many as 20-25 firms or design teams might generate design concepts for important projects, with only the project winner and 2-4 runners-up receiving financial compensation. For this reason, the *Wettbewerb* system is unlikely to gain traction in the U.S. without broader changes in urban policy or professional practice.

The use of *Wettbewerbe* is one particularly tangible difference between American and German planning, and it became a focus for me, as I enjoyed a 4-month work placement in the Berlin Senate Department of Urban Development and Environment's *Wettbewerbsreferat*. This way of doing things sheds light on the very different priorities and values of the two planning systems, and the different trajectories that can lead big urban development projects to "happen". The German public sector delivers far more public sector-led projects and planning decisions, in contrast to the U.S. system, in which development policies vary city to city but are generally more property-owner driven. Furthermore, in Germany, the public sector's focus on design and their cooperation with a tightknit professional community, through the jury system, are two structural differences that enable the *Wettbewerb* system to work. American city administrations are not always as design-focused, sometimes writing their own design codes and frameworks, but in other cases, leaving decision-making to private entities owning the land and managing the finances of the project. An American public sector body would be unlikely to have the support of either developers or architects if they chose to generate concepts by competition alone as well, given the more time-consuming nature of a *Wettbewerb* and its focus on design rather than cost and value for money. These structural differences are quite extreme, and so while I found the discussions occurring in the *Wettbewerbe* themselves to be fascinating, I found it most interesting to understand how the system was structured to function in this way and the values that enabled practitioners to buy into it.

Observations like these contributed to one of my main goals for my Bosch Fellowship year: understanding how German city policies support good design, and which methods might be applicable in the US. While the systems differ so drastically that few approaches are directly transferable, I learned a huge amount about the different ways to conceive of, structure, deliver and manage large-scale urban planning projects from my time working in Germany. This paper will explore some of the key differences I observed, which not only taught me about German planning practice but also caused me to reexamine our way of doing things in the U.S.

Planning System Context

Germany and the U.S. have numerous structural similarities that allow for relatively easy comparison between their urban development policies. First, both countries operate within a

three-tiered system, with an overall framework comprising Federal, State and City levels of governance and regulation. Residents of each country also enjoy a similar quality of life, given the comparable economic outputs and GDPs of both countries. Accordingly, residents often have similar expectations for quality of development, although expectations on dwelling size, utilities and sustainability measures differ between the two countries and regionally.

Germany's current planning system dates back to the *Grundgesetz* (Basic Law) of 1949, which set out the decentralized decision-making process that exists today.[1] The entities involved include the *Bund* (federal government), the 16 *Länder* (state) governments (3 of which are the "city-states" of Berlin, Hamburg and Bremen), 111 planning regions and about 12,500 *Gemeinden* (municipalities).[2] This hierarchy, and the structured collaboration across these different levels, in many ways characterizes the German planning system.[3]
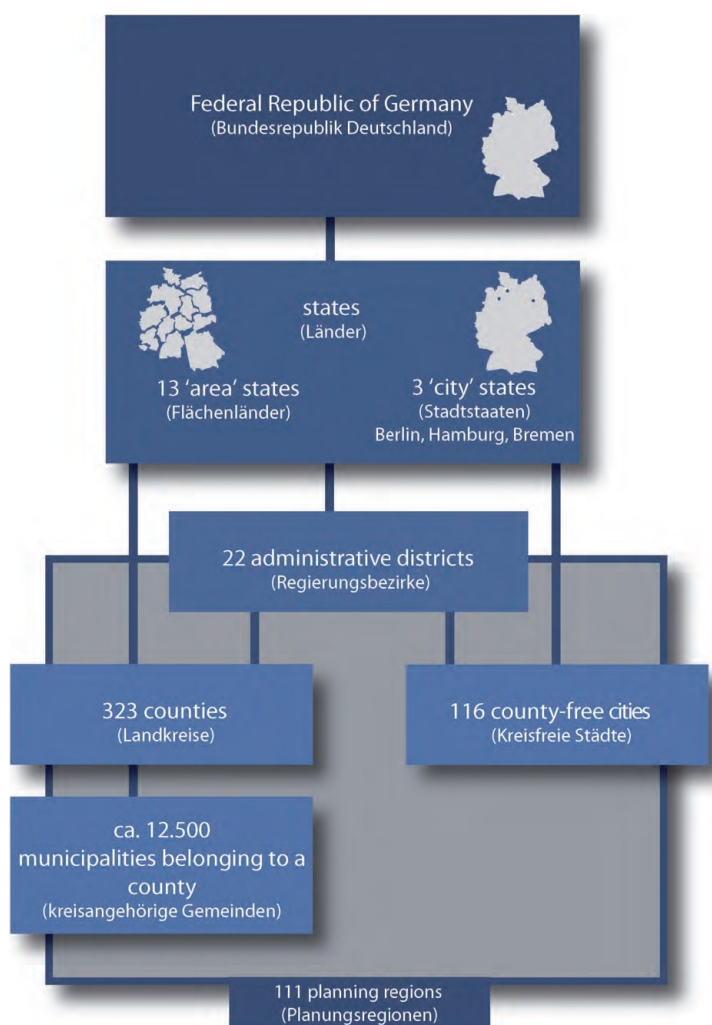
German Urban Planning Governance Structure. Source: Pahl-Weber, Elke and Dietrich Henkel. „The Planning System and Planning Terms in Germany: A Glossary." Studies in Spatial Development, 2008. p13.

[1] Buehler, Ralph and Stephan Schmidt. „The Planning Process in the US and Germany: A Comparative Analysis."*International Planning Studies*, Vol 12, No 1, 55-75, Feb 2007. p3.
[2] Buehler, Ralph and Stephan Schmidt. „The Planning Process in the US and Germany: A Comparative Analysis." *International Planning Studies*, Vol 12, No 1, 55-75, Feb 2007. p3.
[3] Pahl-Weber, Elke and Dietrich Henkel. „The Planning System and Planning Terms in Germany: A Glossary." Studies in Spatial Development, 2008. p13.

The Federal Government provides overarching goals for planners to achieve, and sets the frameworks within which planners work. In short, the Federal Government's role "is limited essentially to the development of guiding principles which provide the legal basis for state spatial planning and the specifications for sectoral planning…. Establishing comprehensive frameworks for spatial development of the whole country, taking account of the general conditions for different policies."[4] Federal acts have set the parameters for the other actors in the planning system, such as the *Raumordnungsgesetz* (Federal Spatial Planning Act), which set the stage for *Länder* to create their own spatial planning laws.[5] The *Baugesetzbuch*, or Federal Building Code, is also a federal document, developed in 1986 and updated in 1997. The code dictates building requirements as well as regulations on the content of local land use plans, stating that planning should aim to "serve the common good… (and) create a balance between the different interests in the use of land."[6] While this statement is quite broad, it articulates a vision of planning and development as a force for common good,

Through work in the private sector for my second Stage, I also saw that the Federal Government regularly commissions strategic research on built environment issues. I personally experienced this through the "B-Mobility" project, which my firm supported and which was commissioned by the *Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Stadtentwicklung*.[7] The project addressed policy opportunities for further "electric-mobility" in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany, and also provided spatial development concepts for types of sites ranging from city center to residential neighborhood. This sort of research is occasionally commissioned at the Federal level in the U.S., often in relation to specific project sites of the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or other grant programs, but American Federally-led programs rarely engage in this kind of spatial analysis for more widespread implementation. Accordingly, as an American planner, I admired the way the German federal government engages in issues related to sustainable development, and its message that sustainability and social equity are valuable goals and applicable to all *Länder*. Moreover, planning aspirations such as those articulated in the B-Mobility project, particularly those related to sustainability, dovetail with other Federal Government initiatives such as the *Energiewende*.

The German *Länder* then develop with their own planning laws, *Landesplanungsgesetze*, which operate within the federal frameworks.[8] These locally developed approaches can include spatial development plans, housing plans, buildings codes (following the frameworks established by the federal government) and design guidance.[9] *Gemeinden*, or municipalities, then follow the planning guidance set forth by the *Länder*, developing their own local land use plans, or *Flächennutzungspläne (FNPs)*, and regulating development using these plans.[10] Landscape Plans are also developed at the local level, designed to consider big picture environmental issues in conjunction with the *FNP*s[11], and thus indicating Germany's

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[4] Oxley, Michael and Tim Brown et. al, "Review of European Planning Systems." Centre for Comparative Housing Research, Leicester Business School, DeMontfort University. Dec 2009. p24.

[5] Oxley, Michael and Tim Brown et. al, "Review of European Planning Systems." Centre for Comparative Housing Research, Leicester Business School, DeMontfort University. Dec 2009. p24.

[6] NewRur (Urban Pressure on Rural Areas) EU Project. 2001-2004. "Spatial Planning and Land-use Planning in Germany." p1.

[7] Buro Happold, "BeMobility: Berlin Elektromobil 2.0." Accessed via: http://www.burohappold.com/projects/project/bemobility-berlin-elektromobil-2-0-202/

[8] NewRur (Urban Pressure on Rural Areas) EU Project. 2001-2004. "Spatial Planning and Land-use Planning in Germany." p1.

[9] Oxley, Michael and Tim Brown et. al, "Review of European Planning Systems." Centre for Comparative Housing Research, Leicester Business School, DeMontfort University. Dec 2009. p24.

[10] Oxley, Michael and Tim Brown et. al, "Review of European Planning Systems." Centre for Comparative Housing Research, Leicester Business School, DeMontfort University. Dec 2009. p24.

[11] Interview, Almut Jirku, *Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtenwicklung und Umwelt*.

"strong ethos of environmental management and mechanisms for integrating environmental concerns into decision-making."[12] Finally, *Gemeinden* develop block-level design guidance in the form of *Bebauungspläne (B-Plans)*, which are detailed visual plans including requirements for land use, setbacks, building massing and open space. These B-Plans are typically developed in line with a winning proposal from a *Wettbewerb*. Whether B-Plans are developed in house by city administrations, or on contract for an administration by design consultants, these documents represent a far greater level of detailed involvement in the design process than is usually seen in the American public sector.

This extremely structured, hierarchical system offers a strong contrast to the American approach to planning. Aside from national housing policies and a few other specialized areas, the U.S. Federal Government does not address design and planning regulation, leaving these issues to the cities and states. Accordingly, different states and cities have adopted entirely different policies – from prescriptive approaches such as Portland's Urban Growth Boundary through to entirely market-driven approaches, such as Houston's decision to forgo a zoning code. The practice of urban planning in the U.S. thus differs greatly from city to city and site to site, whereas in Germany the practice is more widely comparable across the country. In some ways, it is also easier to describe the "culture" of planning in Germany – and its focus on design, sustainability and social equity aspirations – than it is to generalize about the values promoted by the American planning system, given the different approaches and policies in different cities and states. However, both systems represent approaches to planning developed within similar overall national, regional and municipal governance frameworks.

Local Planning & Zoning

Working within a federal and state-developed framework, local planning in Germany is in many ways more structured than it is in the US. Beyond this, the practice of local planning is much more design-led and spatial in nature, given the requirements for corresponding *FNP*s, Landscape Plans and *Bebauungspläne*. While the vast majority of American cities use zoning codes and comprehensive plans, the zoning codes are often purely land use-based and do not address design, or "form-based" issues. Cities that choose to implement design or form-based zoning policies are relatively rare and are generally considered progressive in planning circles.

During my year as a Fellow, Berlin was my lab for local planning, which I found fascinating: the city's transformation in the 25 years since reunification indicates what the German planning system can accomplish, and where it can struggle. (For a more detailed look at planning after the fall of the Berlin Wall, I wrote a piece for Planning Magazine in March 2015 entitled "Putting Berlin Back Together Again." An American Planning Association log-in or magazine purchase is required.)

The current Berlin *FNP* dates to the reunification period, but has been updated many times since initial publication. Priorities included rejoining the spatial divisions between former east and west, concentrating development in the inner city, equalizing the quality of infrastructure between the two sides of the city, and limiting urban expansion to the northeast.[13] The

[12] Oxley, Michael and Tim Brown et. al, "Review of European Planning Systems." Centre for Comparative Housing Research, Leicester Business School, DeMontfort University. Dec 2009. p24.
[13] Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, *Flächennutzungsplan*, 1994.

corresponding Landscape Plan also proposed a new green system that has been largely implemented, comprising an inner park ring and an outer park ring, as well as north-south and east-west green axes.[14] *Wettbewerbe* were also a major part of the replanning of the city, with Potsdamer Platz and the *Spreebogen* Government Quarter offering the most prominent examples.

The post-reunification *FNP* replaced a prior *FNP* from the late '80s, and built from initial post-reunification studies, including a 1991 Report on the Former Border Strip, a 1992 Spatial Structure Concept Plan and a subsequent "Sectoral Development Plan." These initial studies allowed planners to explore spatial concepts before committing to an urban structure that would be sanctioned by an *FNP* for the next 25-30 years. Indeed, the Berlin Senate authors FNPs every 20-30 years, or whenever a change in planning philosophy or circumstance calls for it.[15] After adoption, the plans are in use for the duration, but are updated as needed using an established revision and public consultation process. Specifically, the most recently updated version of Berlin's *FNP* states that issues such as "demographic change, social segregation between different parts of the city, a limited public budget and the competition with other metropolitan areas" have inspired revisions.[16]

The current Berlin *FNP*'s goals include encouraging environmentally-friendly development, providing housing in line with demographic change, ensuring that the city is socially balanced, supporting economic development, strengthening urban centers and creating high-quality open spaces.[17] Many of these goals relate to federally stated objectives which all cities must consider, although only cities themselves can best determine how to deliver the housing, open space and amenities within their spatial and budget constraints. In Berlin's case, the city also works closely with the *Bezirk* (local district) governments on design, development and social cohesion programs, and the planning system encourages a "productive tension" between the two levels.[18]
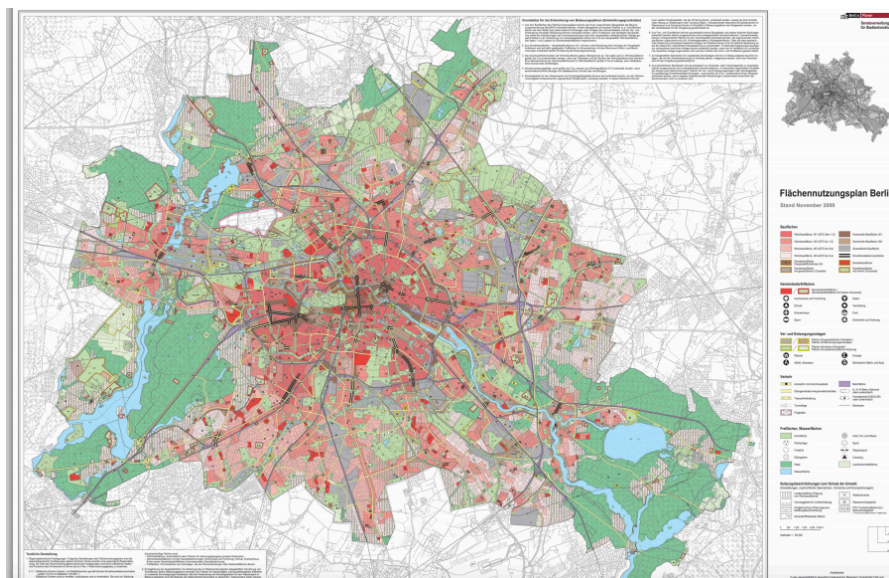
Current Berlin FNP land use plan, courtesy the Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt

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[14] Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt, *Landschaftsplan*, 1994.

[15] Interview, Almut Jirku, *Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtenwicklung und Umwelt*.

[16] Land Use Plan (FNP) Berlin, November 2009 Edition. Accessed via: http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/planen/fnp/pix/fnp/background_contents_2010.pdf. (12 Mar 2015)

[17] Land Use Plan (FNP) Berlin, November 2009 Edition. Accessed via: http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/planen/fnp/pix/fnp/background_contents_2010.pdf. (12 Mar 2015)

[18] Interview, Manfred Kühne, *Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtenwicklung und Umwelt*.

Bebauungspläne (B-Plans), the detailed urban design plans that prescribe building setbacks and physical massing, as well as public space parameters, are then managed at both the city and *Bezirk* levels. In most cases, these B-Plans are created after a *Wettbewerb*, in which a jury selects a detailed site design concept. City administrations may then create B-Plans in-house, adhering to the *Wettbewerb* proposal, although this depends on the site in question and the staffing capacity of the local authority. According to international urban design network RUDI, "the requirements of a particular B-Plan, including both the regulating plan and the written justification, allow no room for interpretation."[19] Although B-Plans in general are extremely prescriptive, local authorities may use the plans to achieve different aims, or at different scales, or in the context of developer-led, city-led or even *Bebauungsgruppe* (community building collective)-led development. American municipalities rarely exert this level of control over a building site, although mechanisms for doing this might be considered for special projects developed by the public sector. However, American private sector developers may choose to develop detailed parameters of this kind, both to ensure good design and to protect property values.

In the U.S., the closest public sector comparison to a B-Plan may be a Form-Based Code. A Form-Based Code regulates development focusing on desired physical building form rather than building use and development controls such as FAR (Floor Area Ratio). While an effective tool, the Form-Based Code remains relatively niche: as of 2012, only 252 of these codes had been adopted.[20] American municipalities also sometimes regulate at the scale of the B-Plan when approving PUDs (Planned Unit Developments). PUDs are integrated development plans, occurring on a single site or connected sites and can be used to circumvent outdated zoning codes, such as codes which segregate building uses, to achieve a more progressive outcome.[21] American planners working regularly with PUDs and Form-Based Codes may appreciate the methodology behind B-Plans and the detailed regulatory frameworks these create for urban development. However, American planners in cities which have chosen not to adopt zoning, or to adopt zoning which focuses on building use alone rather than form, would most likely find B-Plans too limiting design-wise and restrictive on market forces.

Funding Streams

The strong public sector in Germany has traditionally taken a leadership role in urban planning projects, particularly in large-scale infrastructure and development projects. In Berlin, this was particularly the case during the '90s, during which the city led an ambitious effort to reconnect former east and west, update outdated eastern infrastructure and develop a new government quarter, the *Spreebogen*. The massive development program that ensued is too complex to detail in this paper, but does simply illustrate the type of leadership afforded to public sector groups in the German system. The funding made available to this type of development was also substantial, and often linked to Berlin's governmental role as a capital city.

[19] Stille, Katja. "The B-Plan in Germany." Accessed via: http://www.rudi.net/books/15903
[20] Perez, Tony. "Top 10 Misconceptions about Form-Based Codes." *Better Cities and Towns*. 23 Sept 2014. Accessed via: http://bettercities.net/article/top-10-misconceptions-about-form-based-codes-21304
[21] American Planning Association. "Quick Notes: Planned Unit Development." Accessed via: https://www.planning.org/pas/quicknotes/pdf/QN22.pdf

When American cities or other public sector entities have large-scale sites for redevelopment, administrations often seek out opportunities for public-private partnerships, or sell the sites to private developers after creating the zoning requirements for use and density. The most high-profile urban redevelopment projects in the USA right now follow this model, such as Hudson Yards in New York or the Southwest Waterfront or Union Station redevelopments in Washington D.C.. As a contrast, in post-reunification Berlin, the city administration ran *Wettbewerbe* for key sites and then either built the proposals outright or sold the land to private interests committed to building the sites as proposed in the *Wettbewerbe*. Berlin's budget crisis in the late 1990s led to the slowing down of these projects and a reconsideration of the Senate's role as a large-scale land developer.[22] However, even with a radical series of land sales and a move towards smaller-scale projects, the Senate's funding and development work is still more substantial than a comparable American municipality. Private developers also often follow a version of the public-sector *Wettbewerb* model when initiating their own projects, to show their commitment to design as a public good and to achieve better progress with consultation and coordination with the Senate, *Bezirke* and communities.

A related topic of interest for me was one-time public financing vehicles used to speed decision-making and funding availability for key design projects. The IBA (International Building Exhibition or *Internationale Bauausstellung*) is one such national program that has had a transformative impact on regions across Germany. IBA festivals are by nature short-term, designed to fund temporary design interventions intended to serve as models for longer-term strategic and structural change in their host regions and further afield. The projects receive substantial federal funding to spearhead development that will then be supported longer-term at the *Land* and *Stadt* level.

IBAs have occurred across Germany and today represent a microcosm of architectural history, showcasing each era's most innovative design philosophies. For example, the 1979-1987 Berlin IBA produced one of the world's most ambitious postmodernist development programs, creating models for new buildings scaled in the context of a city's historic urban fabric. In Kreuzberg, for example, many IBA outputs stand to this day – apartment buildings designed at the same scale as the *Altbauen* surrounding them, yet exhibiting clever architectural detailing reflective of postmodernist priorities. The outputs were substantial: the IBA represented a $1.2 billion building program financed by federal, city and private interests, which produced housing for 30,000 people.[23] These historically-scaled, postmodernist buildings offered a strong contrast to the modernist architecture and car-oriented development of the '60s and '70s, with the *New York Times* describing the event at the time as the "most complete realization of post-modernist planning ideas of the 1970s and early 80s."[24]

More recently, the 2006-2013 Hamburg IBA experimented with sustainable building technologies unlikely to be produced in a purely commercial context, such as the now-famous "Algae-powered" building[25]. All in all, the initiative included more than 60 sites, most of which were on the "Renewable Wilhemsburg" island, which sought to achieve a 100%

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[22] Interview, Manfred Kühne, *Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt*.

[23] Giovanni, Joseph. „Changing the Face of West Berlin." *The New York Times*. 14 April 1988. Accessed via:
http://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/14/garden/changing-the-face-of-west-berlin.html

[24] Giovanni, Joseph. „Changing the Face of West Berlin." *The New York Times*. 14 April 1988. Accessed via:
http://www.nytimes.com/1988/04/14/garden/changing-the-face-of-west-berlin.html

[25] Wallis, David. "When Algae on the Exterior is a Good Thing," *The New York Times*. 24 April 2013. Accessed via
http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/25/business/energy-environment/german-building-uses-algae-for-heating-and-cooling.html?_r=0

renewable energy supply.[26] Described by *Metropolis* magazine as "an implementable framework for development or redevelopment on a large scale," the IBA represented over €1 billion in investment, with two thirds coming from private sources.[27] The city administration saw this large-scale investment as a means of both drawing development to within the city's boundaries and developing a framework to respond to climate change. The approach mirrors German society's willingness to work with government administrations on ambitious planning issues, leading one American journalist to note that "from the American point of view, with its historic suspicion of government reach, this might easily seem overly idealistic and, dare I say it, socialist. But one could also argue that cities like Hamburg could not re-develop large under-utilized territories as quickly and smartly without the guiding hand, incentives, and management of the city-state."[28]

Perhaps my favorite IBA site visited this year was Emscher Park, the site for 120 projects for the "ecological, economic and social renewal" of the post-industrial Ruhr Valley.[29] This 1990-1999 IBA had a particular focus on green space, given the region's previous lack of natural areas, and thus spurred the development of several large-scale parks on reclaimed industrial land. These landscape parks, such as the 180-ha *Duisburg Nord Landschaftspark*, are now prized community amenities as well as regional and national tourist attractions. The initial federal funding from IBA allowed for the projects to begin in terms of up-front design work and construction costs, and now on-going maintenance is assured through traditional funding approaches. For example, at Duisburg Nord, two thirds of the park's on-going funding comes from *Stadt* and *Land* administrations, while one third is generated through venue rentals and other commercial initiatives.[30] This park was a favorite of mine not only on account of the inspirational industrial structures but also on account of the community-initiated ideas within the park design concept – such as the former gasometer, which is now home to a scuba diving club dive pool featuring a submerged artificial reef, yacht wreck and Trabi.[31]

The former Ironworks, Duisburg Nord Park, initiated through IBA. Photo by the author.

[26] „Regenerative Urban Renewal in Practice: Renewable Wilhemsburg." Energiewende.de . Accessed via http://energytransition.de/2014/07/regenerative-urban-development-in-wilhelmsburg/

[27] Horton, Guy. „Future Hamburg Now, Part 2: Exploring Sustainable Inner City Redevelopment." 9 Jan 2014. *Metropolis*. http://www.metropolismag.com/Point-of-View/January-2014/Future-Hamburg-Now-Part-2-Exploring-Sustainable-Inner-city-Re-development/

[28] Horton, Guy. „Future Hamburg Now, Part 2: Exploring Sustainable Inner City Redevelopment." 9 Jan 2014. *Metropolis*. Accessed via: http://www.metropolismag.com/Point-of-View/January-2014/Future-Hamburg-Now-Part-2-Exploring-Sustainable-Inner-city-Re-development/

[29] International Exhibition Emscher Park (IBA), Duisburg Nord website. http://en.landschaftspark.de/the-park/evolution/iba

[30] Interview with Claudia Kalinowski, *Duisburg Nord Landschaftspark*.

[31] Interview with Claudia Kalinowski, *Duisburg Nord Landschaftspark*.

Public funding streams to enable large-scale development projects are less frequently available in the U.S., particularly given the more prominent role played by private landowners and the focus on landowners' development rights. Instead, funding for innovative projects often comes from private, philanthropic sources, with this being particularly evident through a new wave of urban parks designed and built in the past decade. New York's High Line has become a poster-child for this type of development: it is managed entirely privately through a private conservancy with an $8 million/year operating budget largely generated through fundraising.[32] As a contrast, German landscape parks such as Duisburg Nord cannot fundraise or solicit donations, due to their status as publicly-owned and managed sites.[33] German designers and policymakers have taken note of the current park funding trends in the U.S., but are weary of them. In general, policymakers are hesitant about moving policymaking and development power from governmental to private hands, given that green spaces are considered critical to public good and thus part of the Government's responsibility to its citizens.

As an American planner, I have seen the great opportunities presented by philanthropy-led urban redevelopment – including recent spectacularly designed proposals, such as D.C.'s 11th Street Bridge elevated park – but strongly agree about the risks. As a result, I admire that German cities have developed some equally cutting-edge parks and redevelopments without a reliance on private funding. In my opinion, focusing innovative development on sites and areas of interest to philanthropists can lead to excellent design and community assets, but also poses great risks in terms of social equity and equitable facilities access. If city administrations allow private hands to guide public realm investment strategy too strongly, communities with fewer resources and less vocal citizens' groups may see decreased investment in their open spaces, or a lack of "new" parks on par with those proposed in wealthier or more central parts of the city.

On the other hand, public-private partnerships are one collaborative funding structure of interest to both American and German planners. Although too complex of a concept to go into in detail here, the concept can extend to both funding – a model of frequent use in the US – and to the planning and decision-making process. The public-private funding model is frequently used in the U.S. for large-scale projects in which new development complements large-scale investment in city infrastructure, such as new transit hubs surrounded by high-density development. The city administration may fund the infrastructure after selling the adjacent land, or may offer developers favorable land prices or tax incentives to joint-fund the infrastructure.

Many of the largest development projects in Germany also provide prominent examples of public-private cooperation, such as HafenCity, a redeveloped port site in Hamburg that is Europe's largest downtown redevelopment at 127 ha.[34] A publicly owned *GmbH* is responsible for site development, leading the masterplanning process, coordinating private investment and implementing design proposals through the typical system of *Wettbewerbe* and B-Plans. The GmbH's proceeds from land sales then go back towards the costs of public infrastructure for the project, such as roads, bridges, parks and other public spaces.[35] After the completion of the site, the City plans to dissolve the GmBH, and the area's public

[32] Cohen, Stephanie and Jennifer Maloney. "New Chief Envisions Performances on the High Line." The Wall Street Journal. 17 October 2013. Accessed via: http://www.wsj.com/articles/SB10001424052702304864504579141722833437210
[33] Interview with Claudia Kalinowski, *Duisburg Nord Landschaftspark*.
[34] HafenCity Facts and Figures. Accessed via: http://www.hafencity.com/en/overview/hafencity-facts-and-figures.html
[35] HafenCity Facts and Figures. Accessed via: http://www.hafencity.com/en/overview/hafencity-facts-and-figures.html

services and on-going development will function like any other part of the city, as opposed to a privately managed new neighborhood. The GmbH has been such a success in terms of driving high-quality development that it is now managing Hamburg's Olympic Bid masterplanning process in partnership with the public sector authority.

In Germany, partnerships are also valued as an approach to consultation and overall strategic planning. Many planners I spoke with at the Berlin Senate, including *Abteilungsleiter* Manfred Kühne, emphasized the increased involvement of companies, universities and other institutional entities in the planning process and spoke of this as the likely future direction of planning in the city, particularly given the public sector budget problems in the past decade. Direct involvement from corporate, institutional and university interests can lead to earlier consensus and cede some of the Senate's past decision-making power. "We have different resources now. We cannot and do not need any more to have a completely top-down strategy," Kühne explained, while describing the evolution of the city administration's approach to planning since reunification.

When at work in the private sector during my second Stage at the Buro Happold Cities Group, I also gained insight into the potential for involvement from German industry in urban planning. This time the work was far from Berlin: at Buro Happold, I primarily focused on a GIZ (*Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit*)-funded planning project to develop a curriculum on designing industrial districts for Indian planners. Given Germany's reputation for industrial excellence, insight from large corporations, and from German think tanks dedicated to industrial economic development, was a key aspect of the project. Furthermore, exploring means of financing both public infrastructure and large-scale, private industrial development in a coordinated way formed key aspects of the training materials. The project gave me some understanding of how other governmental entities look to German private sector groups for guidance, in urban planning as well as economic development policy. The project also enabled me to see how Germany's reputation for industrial excellence can impact planning and design approaches, and the international perception of German planning and its strengths.

Community Engagement Strategies

Community engagement in the urban development process was another area of focus for me in my exploration of German urban planning. The German system for public involvement in planning is extremely developed, with community input prioritized and firmly rooted in processes ranging from the development of *FNPs* to high-profile *Wettbewerbe*. This attitude extends across different regions, with the German Association of Cities recently stating that "public participation.. is an essential precondition for sustainable, integrated urban development."[36] The German Association of Cities also articulated an interest in continuing to seek out new methods of public participation, particularly in the face of skepticism around some of the larger development projects, including those in cities that have run over-budget such as train station redevelopment Stuttgart 21.

Berlin in particular has a rich history of community activism and I observed many Berliners expressing their opinions on urban development projects, as well as their expectations of

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[36] Deutscher Stådtetag. "Culture of Participation in Integrated Urban Development: Working paper of the working group on public participation by the German Association of Cities." 2013.

continuous involvement. My Stage at the Berlin *Senatsverwaltung* included observation of and participation in a wide range of local consultation events, from the often boisterous public process around the future of the *Tempelhofer Feld,* to routine *Bezirk*-led local planning meetings, to public exhibitions on *Wettbewerb* outcomes, which mostly drew members of the design community. The Tempelhof process alone engaged hundreds of people, following several years of engagement around the previous *Wettbewerb* process, which included public events and workshops that drew thousands from the city at large. It is difficult to compare this societal attitude to the U.S., given the very different policy environments city to city or state to state – for example, San Francisco planners may be more accustomed to vocal urban planning activism than those in less progressive settings. Accordingly, some German public participation approaches may be ripe for application in the U.S. in some contexts.

The stronger role of the public sector in German urban planning means that local city administrations are often the first point of contact for major planning initiatives, utilizing community engagement approaches that are embedded into the planning system. Conversely, in the U.S., private developers are more likely to lead new development projects and thus to develop their own engagement strategies in line with local regulations or their perception of local communities' interests. This means that planners and communities in the U.S. are likely to experience a broader range of approaches towards public engagement, whereas German planners typically work with an established process, with innovative new approaches introduced when governmental administrations have the resources or feel strongly about the potential impact of a particular project. *Tempelhofer Feld* was one example of innovative, or far-reaching engagement, developed partially on account of previous community animosity towards the Senate. The *Alte Mitte Neue Liebe* project, which is focused on the masterplanning strategy for the city center site between the *Fernsehturm* and the future *Humboldtsforum*, also employed a number of innovative strategies, given the high-profile nature of the site and likely strong feelings from long-term residents aware of recent developer interest in the area.

Citizen involvement in the *Wettbewerb* process differs depending on the importance of the site and the structure of the competition. Typically, all *Wettbewerbe* include a public exhibition, with workshops, on-the-ground consultation and e-consensus platforms utilized for higher profile projects. Perhaps the most fruitful time for members of the public to engage with the *Wettbewerb* process is during the development of the Brief – when the Senate determines what type of output is required and what criteria will be used for the judgment of a contest. Larger scale planning initiatives, such as *Alte Mitte Neue Liebe* also include far-reaching community engagement before the *Wettbewerb* process. This may include more interactive engagement strategies designed to involve otherwise uninterested audiences, such as a *Participatives Theater* event planned for *Alte Mitte Neue Liebe*.[37] Interestingly, the *Alte Mitte Neue Liebe* process also included engagement approaches designed to get audiences to look at the site – which is already known well by most Berliners, given its prominence – in a new way. For me, a highlight of a consultation event I attended was a "Sound Walk", in which a local artist led a silent group around the site to focus on its varied sound environments. A "Living Library" at the same consultation event also offered visitors a chance to speak to a range of professionals involved with the site from non-land-use perspectives, such as government officials, social workers and community leaders. I spoke to

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[37] Berlin.de, "Alte Mitte Neue Liebe." Accessed via: http://stadtdebatte.berlin.de/#href=%2Fpartizipatives-theater&container=%23main-content

a social worker who advocates for children's and teenager's rights, who described the area as a popular gathering place for teens across Berlin, given its location at the convergence of several U-Bahn lines.

Private sector projects that I followed, such as the *Urbane Mitte* mixed-use development proposal next to *Am Gleisdreieck* park, also often incorporate workshop and consultation approaches in advance of a *Wettbewerb* and *B-Plan*. For *Urbane Mitte*, the developer chose to convene both public exhibition events and private stakeholders' workshops for *Senate*, *Bezirk* and other governmental and private officials to discuss their goals for the site with the development team. These workshops stretched over a several-month process, with early convenings focusing on strategic goals and later meetings exploring design concepts that could later be integrated into a *Wettbewerb* brief or a future *B-Plan*. In cases like this one, such proactive engagement is not necessarily required, but developers may choose to move forward in this way to save time and improve coordination with the *Senate*, *Bezirke* and local community. Engaging early and actively is also seen as a way to avoid negative community perception of a development project, which can lead to direct democracy initiatives such as anti-development referenda in extreme cases.

Most high-profile German public sector development projects also develop community engagement approaches of their own, appropriate to the site and range of communities affected by the site's development. One project I followed particularly closely was the management planning process for *Tempelhofer Feld*, the 380-hectare former airfield turned park in Berlin. After a citizen-initiated referendum nullified plans to develop parts of the field, the city administration initiated an ambitious process to involve citizens in the long-term maintenance planning for the green space. In part a response to hostility indicated by the referendum outcome, the process sought to involve the community in a space they had clearly embraced.

Over the course of 9 months in Berlin, I attended about half a dozen different community events about the management of *Tempelhofer Feld*, ranging from small scale "working group" meetings about the consultation process itself to historians' presentations about the site's past uses to a forum in the former airport building attended by hundreds of people. (My enthusiastic husband also regularly attended public evening events with me, and often got more involved in discussions than I was, while I tried to neutrally observe as a fellow practitioner!). As an American planner, I was extremely surprised by the level of public involvement around such a technical subject and was impressed by the Senate's willingness to organize regular workshops, working groups and larger-scale events, as well as the enthusiastic attendance by Berliners of a range of ages and interests. Although community members did not always show the same enthusiasm – as many were in fact eager for more involvement – they clearly embraced the process by participating. The outcomes will be available in fall 2015, and I look forward to following the project after the conclusion of my Bosch year. (For a more detailed look at community engagement at Tempelhof and another high-profile Berlin park project, I wrote this article on community involvement for the Tempelhofer Feld and Am Gleisdreieck Park projects).

Tempelhofer Feld Evening Public Workshop, held in the former airport lounge. Photo by the author.

Private sector stakeholder consultation event for the "Urbane Mitte" development scheme next to Am Gleisdreieck Park. Photo by the author.

A "Sound Walk" exploring the heard landscape of the site south of the Fernsehturm, led by a Berlin artist during the "Alte Mitte Neue Liebe" consultation event. Photo by the author.


The output from a parallel children's consultation event during a Bezirk-led Kiez Planning Workshop in Reichenberger Kiez. Photo by the author.

Community engagement in the German planning process also exists beyond the framework for major new developments or planning initiatives. *Bezirks* regularly lead community planning initiatives, engaging with communities at the *Kiez* level to determine local planning issues and priorities. One approach I found particularly interesting was *Quartiersmanagement*, which is a pillar of the "Social City" initiative. The neighborhood governance program involves local people in neighborhood planning and funding decisions through the creation of locally-led Neighborhood Councils, funded by the *Senate* in areas identified for their social cohesion needs.

Quartiersmanagement is essentially a "top-down, bottom-up" project, in that it is a community and locally-driven initiative centrally funded by the city administration. The program provides

an organized forum for citizens in often-marginalized neighborhoods to participate in the planning process, and to clarify which of their needs can be best met through design and public space improvements, as well as investments in community groups and "soft" community assets. Because it is a formal government program, *Quartiersmanagement* also officially seeks out diverse membership representative of the population in an area. I do not know of any similar programs in the US, aside from community associations that are voluntary in basis and funded through donations and membership dues. The dynamic is also different from that of the the typical American community group in that many of these are Homeowners' Associations (HOAs), in which members share common property ownership interests. Tenants, who represent a far larger proportion of German society and nearly 90% of Berlin's population, often come to the table with different interests and can require different types of engagement methods. Indeed, as renters, Berliners seemed to me to be more eager to embrace diversity and affordability in their neighborhoods, rather than seeking out investments that would enhance property values. Residents echoed these themes in the *Quartiersmanagement* events and workshops I attended, as well as in discussions about many other concrete development proposals.

Quartiersmanagement was a favorite initiative that I learned of this year, and one that I believe could be beneficial if implemented by American local governments. Although the American public is typically less receptive to programs for increased government spending, I thought the program could be successful in changing urban areas with high-need populations. The *Quartiersmanagment* governance framework gave citizens more input into local planning and investment decisions, and opened the door for high-impact, citizen-led projects to receive government funding to scale up their impact. Beyond this, the program created an opportunity for new and old members of the community to get to know each other through the neighborhood councils, which also served as a representative stakeholder groups that private and public sector groups could easily consult when initiating projects in the area.
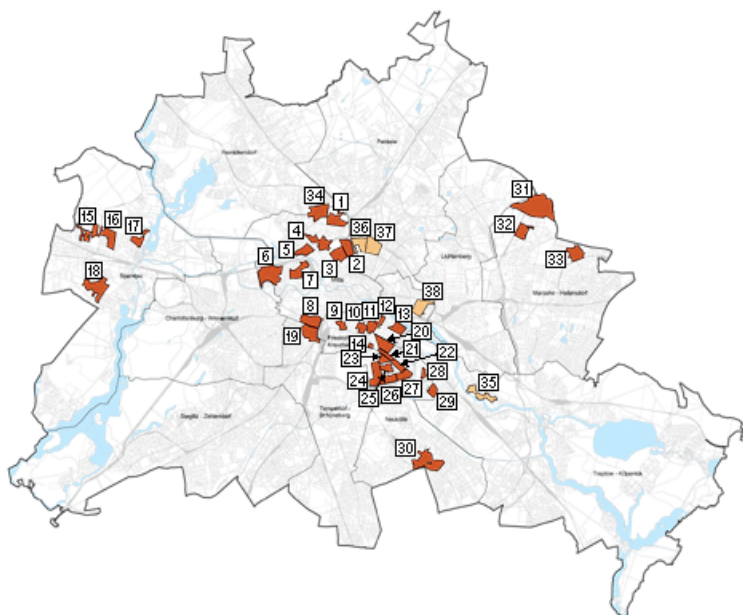
Communities in Berlin with Quartiersmanagement programs. Photo courtesy the Berlin Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt. Accessed via
http://www.stadtentwicklung.berlin.de/wohnen/quartiersmanagement/de/karte.shtml

Conclusions

With my days spent learning about *Quartiersmanagement*, design competitions and federally initiated development funding structures, my time on the Bosch Fellowship exposed me to a range of German planning tools and policies. The year was a wonderful opportunity to gain first-hand experience with German planning practice, and to consider what aspects would be most useful for American practitioners to understand and potentially pilot. Given the strong cultural differences – particularly regarding government funding and property ownership – not all of the German policy approaches that I found successful are appropriate for the U.S. However, in some cases, I found German policies to be potentially applicable, or if not, at least useful for planners in the U.S. to learn from and consider for modification.

Regardless of whether I receive opportunities to directly explore German planning approaches in the American context, I am certain that the exposure has broadened my perspective and will help me generate innovative and regionally appropriate urban planning strategies wherever I work next. I will also long admire the development projects I was exposed to this year. From the magnificent open spaces of *Tempelhofer Feld* to the daunting industrial structures of *Landschaftspark Duisburg Nord*, these spaces were spectacular to see and even more interesting once I understood the complex policies, communities and context behind them.

Finally, meeting a broad cross-section of Berliners through community engagement sessions from Neukölln to Grunewald was fascinating and a good reminder about what drew me to planning in the first place. Gaining an understanding of these communities' interests, priorities and perceptions proved an excellent and enjoyable way for me to learn about the city and appreciate its many changes over the past 25 years. Cities are dynamic by nature, and I am certain that Berlin and the other communities I visited this year will continue to evolve. As this happens, I hope to continue to follow German planning projects and policies from wherever I may be, applying what I learned and getting to know my city as I got to know Berlin this year.

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