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Space-Related Identity Formation in the City: Potentials, Conflicts, and Scenarios of Activation Urban Renewal (Results and Findings of the Berlin-Friedrichshain Case Study)

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Publication Date

1997

Peer reviewed

Working Paper 694

Space-Related Identity Formation in the City:
Potentials, Conflicts, and Scenarios of
Activating Urban Renewal

*Results and Findings of the
Berlin–Friedrichshain Case Study*

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SPACE-RELATED IDENTITY FORMATION IN THE CITY

Potentials, Conflicts, and Scenarios of Activating Urban Renewal

Results and Findings of the Berlin-Friedrichshain Case Study¹

Peter Gerlach

Abstract

This article is based on a research project titled “Berlin-Friedrichshain: Studies on Selected Soft Location-Determining Factors and on Identity Formation in a Mixed Inner City Neighborhood” which has been carried out at the Institute for Regional Development and Structural Planning, Berlin/Erkner, in 1995-96. This project was aimed at exploring forms of belongingness, rules of bonding, and options for acting that individuals and groups have in a typical mixed inner city neighborhood in Berlin when they experience radical change. Another aim of the project was a closer study of the influence exerted by urban space and layout on the identification of individuals and groups with their residential surroundings. This raised the question whether creative action on the part of the residents should be considered a “grassroots planning” potential that could support or initiate endogenous urban development.

Results obtained through town planning and structural area analyses, representative samplings of householders focused on quantitative aspects, and expert-specific area and town planning surveys provided the basis for in-depth studies of space-related identity formation processes. Individual profiles were drawn up from the residents' poll by means of problem-oriented interviews. A topic-related evaluation concept was developed which uses a mixed-method procedure to determine a personal profile on the typicality of an individual's space-related identity formation (perception and social occupation of space, intensity of his or her bond to space, and options for action).

Comparative analyses of the profiles point to three contrasting groups and have yielded the first generalizable results about the experience of and bond felt to space. While perceptual patterns structure the measure of collective space perception with respect to range and focus (a mix of delimitations and spaces of orientation), the social aspects of space occupation focused in space evaluation patterns of differing complexity and intensity reveal their key role in identification processes. The dimensions and sub-scales in these contrasting space evaluation patterns give an indication of external and compensatory values as well as of potentials and destabilizing tendencies in regional development. At the same time, they explain the residents' acceptance of the area as a physical habitat, and about their willingness to see the future prospects of the area. It is these interdependencies that produce the patterns and levels for creative action within what could be called grassroots participation in planning. These patterns and levels indicate the success probability of normative and administrative planning objectives and scenarios, and they should therefore be the basis for endogenous urban development long before statutory participation in planning procedures begins, preparing the ground for a democratic legitimization of the people involved. A brief overview of the approach of the project, its major results, and findings from case studies shall be given below.

¹The results of this study will soon be published by Peter-Lang-Verlag.

1. Hypothesis and approach

The Berlin-Friedrichshain case study was to specifically study any influence that the spatial structure and urban properties might have on the residents' identification with their neighborhood.

Neighborhood in this context means the network of relations between social, functional, spatial, and historical components of this borough in eastern Berlin. Based on the data collected on the town planning and layout planning situation and on the household polls carried out, the project starts from, and aims at the heterogeneous social structure, the interlacing of living, working, transit, and services; the heterogeneous spatial structure and layout; material and immaterial qualities of the spatial skeleton and functional relations; and the processes of change and displacement triggered by the modernization and improvement of housing. The social space (Läpple 1993; Heidemann 1993) and its reflection in the consciousness of individuals and groups has been categorized in subject- and object-related components for the purposes of our empirical study.

Subject-related aspects of our object of study are consciousness and identification patterns of residents (identification with a place) and, based on utilization and reflection processes, the mental representation and affective occupation of the space.² The object-related component of our study is the location with its spatial identity and individuality (identity of a place), i.e. the characteristics of its territorial, functional, phenotypical and historical development which add up to its overall appearance.³

Space-related identity formation should not be studied by taking a static approach but rather as a process of permanent, individual, place-specific and time-dependent interaction of the residents of a city district with their local and supra-local surroundings as conveyed by their experience and perception of space, utilization processes, and options for action. Guiding questions of our study were forms of belonging to spaces that individuals and groups in the mixed neighborhood selected develop with regard to their urban habitat in which they have to or wish to live, the intensity of their bond to their habitat and the environment they experience daily, an environment which is both familiar and alien to them and which has been in a state of profound social and architectural change since the political transformation in 1989. Our special interest was to find potential connections between affiliation with a place, experience of space, and the residents' willingness to adopt community-oriented intentions and forms of action.

Our empirical and theory-guided approach to answering these questions included the following steps:

1. Expert-specific field studies of area and cityscape analyses, collection of a knowledge basis and outline of a concept for more special studies
2. Collection of qualitative data: interviews with residents from the neighborhood studied
3. Discussion of case studies, classification into case types

²Cf. Meier-Dallach, Hohermuth, Nef 1987.

³Cf., in particular, Sieverts 1994, pp. 54f.

4. Interpretation of findings, detection of patterns
5. Conclusions relevant for further fundamental studies and activating urban renewal.

2. Concept, procedure, and findings of the interviews aimed at collecting qualitative data

It was essential for any analysis of case studies to be a basis for further investigation into space-related identity formation to develop a concept of qualitative interviews. The two major components of such a concept are a combined interviewing procedure and an evaluation plan for the case studies.

The combined interviewing procedure was designed as an open, problem-centered interview.⁴ The open interview is supplemented by a request to draw a mental map and by a photo test aimed at detecting the specifics of individual images (e.g. characteristic markers, image components of the neighborhood); it provides opportunities for a dialogue of activating and reflexive questions such as everyday utilization or biographical factors. This part of the project is supported by a brief thematic guideline.

An analytical type construct was suggested to systematize configurational categories and features and to make the planning area more suitable for an empirical study of its spatial and functional structure.⁵ This flexible set of categories allows classification and description of identity components such as city-scape/actual data/important historical elements in accordance with urban macro- and microproperties (e.g. streets, squares, places), delimitations (e.g. buildings, vegetation, small-size architectural elements), and configurational features (e.g. shape, layout patterns, markers) as a function of planning levels (see Fig. 1).

This type of construct as an instrument for precisely analyzing a situation facilitated a systematic and objective recording of space and shape characteristics.⁶ The results of this analysis were discussed at an early stage with representatives of town planning, social planning and urban preservation authorities. Thus, views given by specific experts could be extended and applied to other aspects of assessing surroundings (Figs. 2 to 5).

Furthermore, the results of the situational analysis were used for outlining the interview guidelines. They provided the context for problem-centered questions that were mainly aimed at the interviewee's individual image and perception of space. Using a combined interviewing method, such a knowledge basis can sensitize the interview partners, can help to open up the discussion for social interaction in order to "capture" as many impressions as possible of the interviewee's subjective experience.⁷

⁴Cf. B. Witzel 1982; Bock 1992; Soeffner, Hitzler 1994.

⁵On how to handle the type construct in empirical studies, cf. Gerlach 1995, pp. 72ff.

⁶For more information on the instruments and methods of analysis, see Gerlach 1985, 1992. On visual stock analyses in urban potential field analytics, cf. Krause 1993, pp. 1ff.; Mehlhorn 1988.

⁷The typical interviewee was characterized by the following properties: age between 30 and 40, mostly economically active, mostly living in 3- to 4-person households (with a partner and children), living in Berlin for an average 16 to 17 years and in the city district studied for 7 years.

Figure 1: Characteristics and categories of townscape —
a base for stock taking and interpretation of regional and local identity

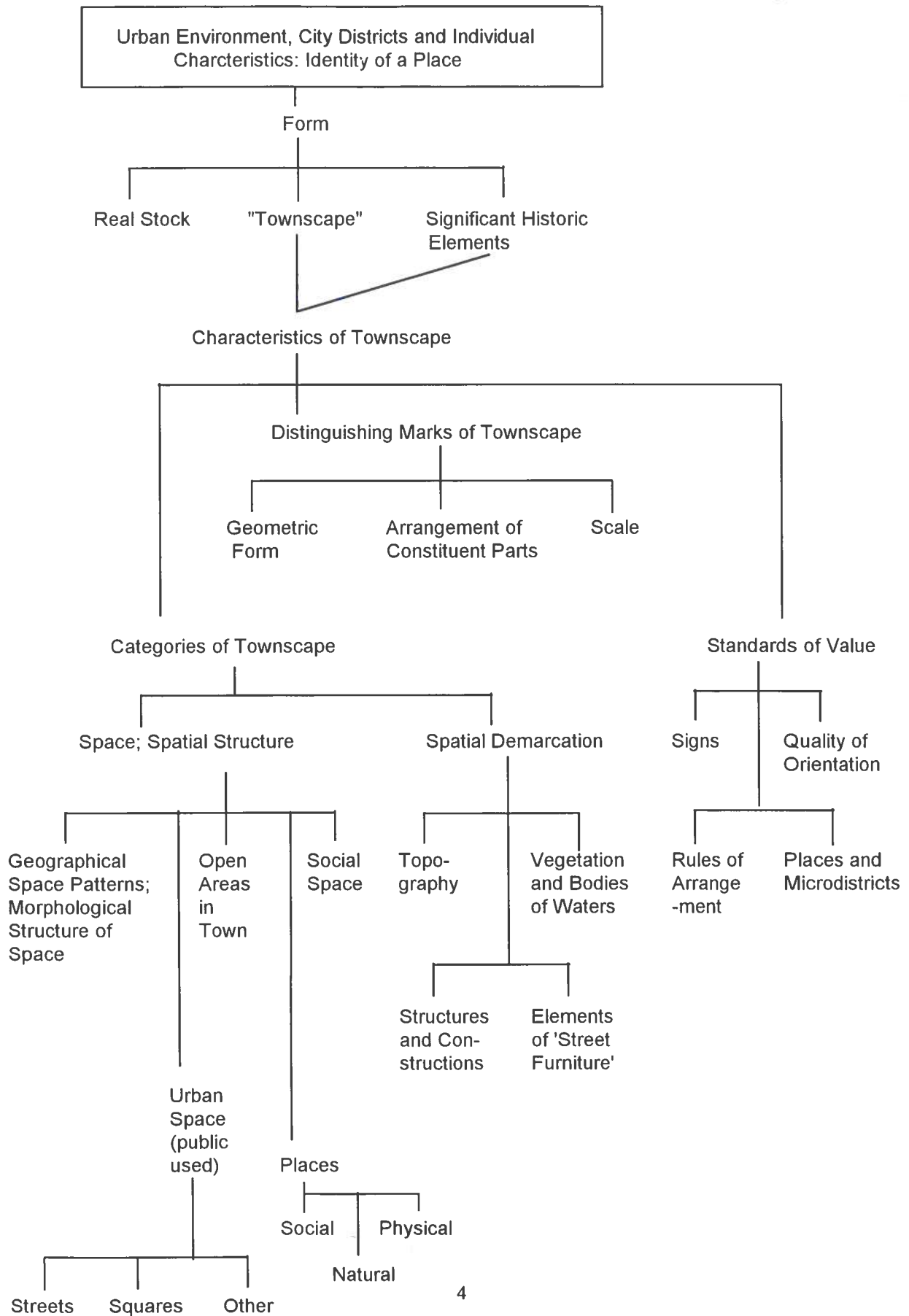


Figure 2: Overview of district townscape zones in study area:
 1- Frankfurter Allee, 2 — Study area, southern range, 3 — Study area, northern range

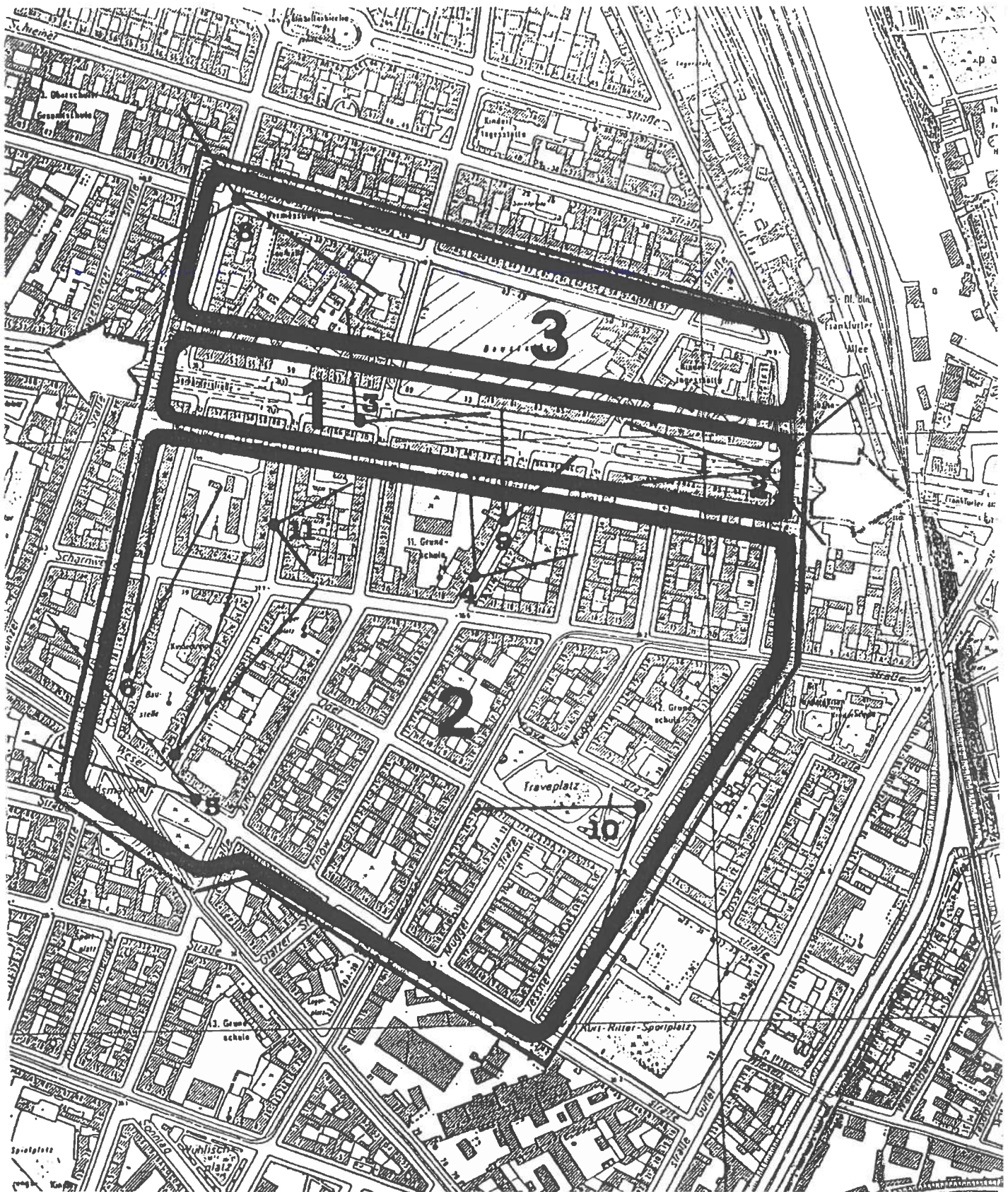


Figure 3: Locations of large-scale planned construction:
urban transformation in the study-area (1 through 4), and in the surrounding district



Figure 4. Townscape-analyses. Some characteristic townscape elements in the study area (1 through 4)



Photo 1:

Townscape with new and distant orienting features:

The photo shows Frankfurter Allee, at its intersection with Jessner Straße, leading West toward the center of Berlin. This linear traffic artery, lined with a mix of architectures, divides the study area into its north and south ranges. Its visual „scenario“, from the Frankfurter Tor (gate) to the Television tower on Alexanderplatz, works as a distant landmark, creating a strong spatial sequence.



Photo 2:

Townscape with near and distant orienting features:

The photo shows, from the same intersection as in figure 1, Frankfurter Allee leading West, toward the newly constructed, district defining „Ring-Center“. The barrier-like quality of the elevated S-bahn line is apparent, as is the role of the highrise tower in establishing the character of the neighboring Lichtenberg district.



Photo 3:

Townscape - dominating new construction:

The photo shows the new „Allee-Plaza“ building wrapping around a corner facing the intersections of Rigauer Straße/Voigtstraße and the Frankfurter Allee. The structure's highly articulated massing makes it an instant landmark, and possesses a sculptural quality that defines the surrounding streetscape.

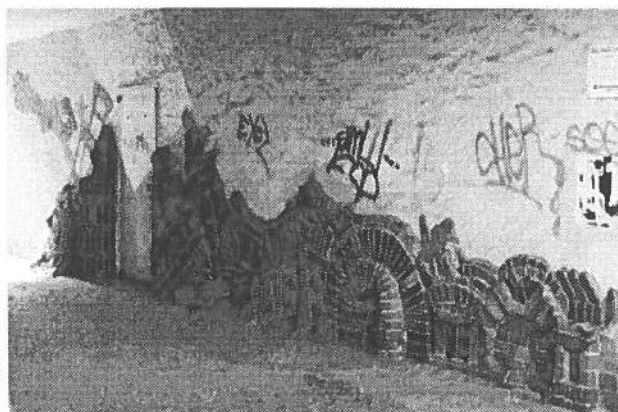


Photo 4:

Public art as a transitional spatial element:

The photo is of a public passageway from Frankfurter Allee to Müggelstraße; part of the street and alley network of the study area. Here a stucco relief marks the transition from metropolitan to neighborhood townscapes - and finds an immediate competition in the spray-paint tags of unofficial „street art“.

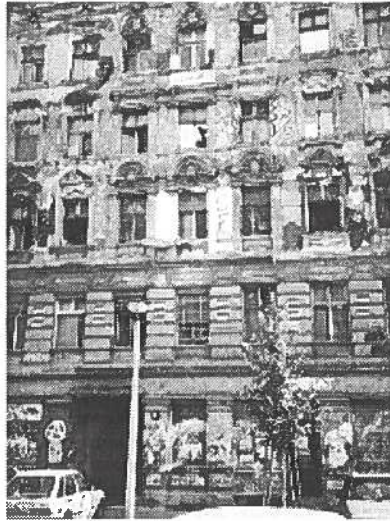


Photo 9



Photo 10



Photos 9,10,11:
Visual and plastic qualities of facades in the study area.

Photo 9: A Kinzigstraße facade transformed informally, bit-by-bit, by squatters.

Photo 10: Simple geometric shapes create a colorful, sculptural entrance for a day-care center.

Photo 11: A gap in the built fabric along Jessnerstraße is decorated with a suprematist - inspired design applied to a firewall. Against the standard background mix of 19th Century facades and late 20th C. concrete-panel housing, such contrasting urban design elements serve as dominant landmarks.

Photo 11

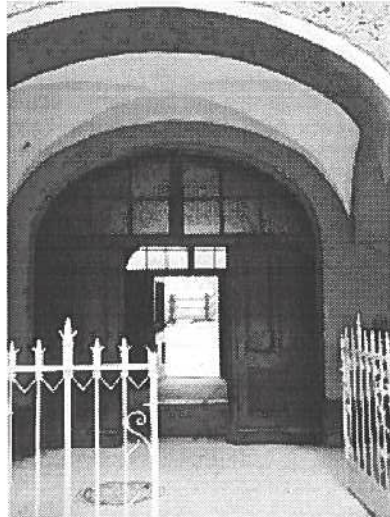
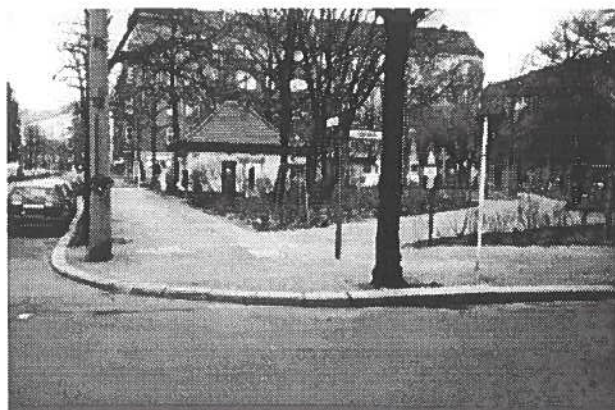


Photo 12



Photo 13



Photos 12, 13, 14:
Small-scale urban landmarks in the study area:

Photo 12: From the public street-space of Scharnweberstraße, a distinguishing gate element demarcates the transition to the courtyard of an elementary school.

Photo 13: The view from a bend in Finowstraße-Nord shows an urban scenario composed of business signage, concrete-panel housing blocks of the 1980's, and-closing the end of Finowstraße - building at the northern stretch of the Frankfurter Allee.

Photo 14: Traveplatz and its street connection to the Frankfurter - Allee, as seen from Weichselstraße looking north.

Photo 14

The evaluation concept for the case studies includes the regular structuring of the transcribed interviews⁸ and a specific approximation method for components of the individual image⁹ which will provide new findings on the individual experience and reflection of space, and bonds to space before the background of socioanthropological and culture-specific factors. The attempted assignment of tendencies is derivable from the case studies of the respective components of an individual's identity formation, i.e. perception types (W1 to W5), bonding forms (B1 to B7), and forms of assigning options for action to participation in planning and planning levels (P1 to P5) (cf. Figs. 8, 9).

The mental map analysis has a dual function. It is used, on the one hand, to give a more detailed definition of the image of an individual's space of social experience and orientation at various moments. It supplements in this respect the statements taken from the interviews by providing a qualitative classification. On the other hand, the mental map is used for assigning planning levels. These statements and the outcome of the interview are combined to approaches with participation in planning.¹⁰

The evaluation components are supplemented by other criteria for assessment. These were centered around aspects of motion-related orientation (e.g. boundaries, distances, functional fields, domains of architectural markers), attitudinal patterns (e.g. positive, critical, indifferent) as well as the basis of experiencing space (e.g. spatial experience mainly based on routines). All these attempts at evaluation are summarized in a process model. The steps of this process are a mix of assessment and evaluation methods and comprise the main components of the evaluation approximation procedure used for all case studies. Used as a guideline, it makes the evaluation more objective and efficient and may be taken as a first step towards operationalization.

The outcome of the evaluation sums up the findings of the respective case study and documents them in the form of a personal profile which is structured as follows:

1. Personal data
2. Personal profile
 - 2.1. Space perception and reflection
 - 2.2. Intensity grades with respect to the bond to space
 - 2.3. Approaches to planning participation; wishes for, and will to effect change
3. Brief characterization and typicalization
4. Appendix to the findings: mental map, image comparison for the area; polarity profiles of selected places.

Fig. 6 shows a typical example, with the associated appendices to the findings. The findings from the case studies provided the basis for pattern detection and attempts at generalization.

⁸Cf., for example, Bock 1992, pp. 99ff.; Bohnsack 1993, in particular, pp. 11ff. and pp. 127ff.

⁹Cf., for example, Becker, Keim 1972, pp. 110 ff.; for the meaning of forms cf. Weber 1995, pp. 49ff. and 75ff.

¹⁰Cf., for example, Welz 1991, Schilling 1994, Ploch, Schilling 1994, Ploch 1995, Deyl 1995.

Figure 6: Subjective mental maps and evaluations of important streets in the study area

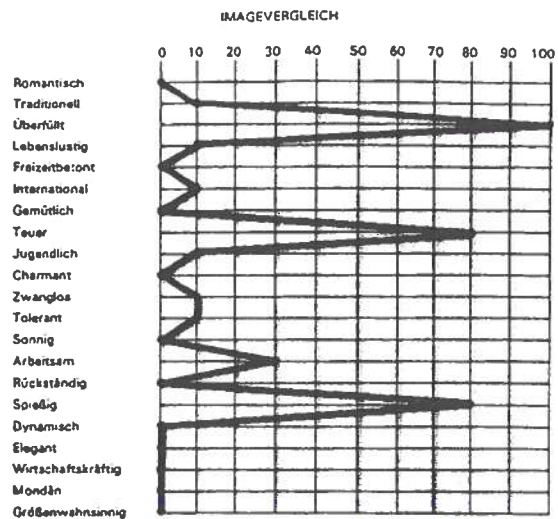
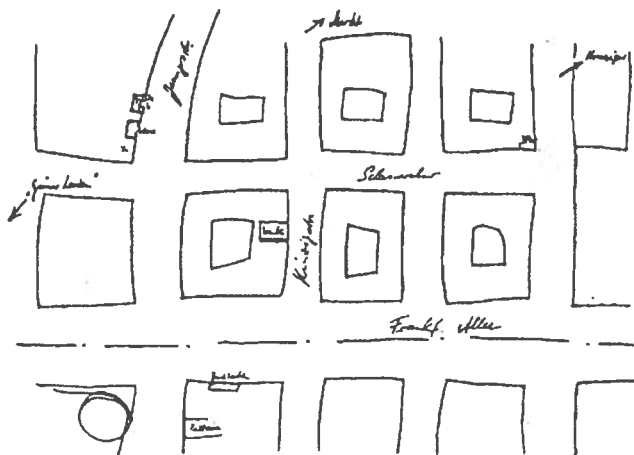
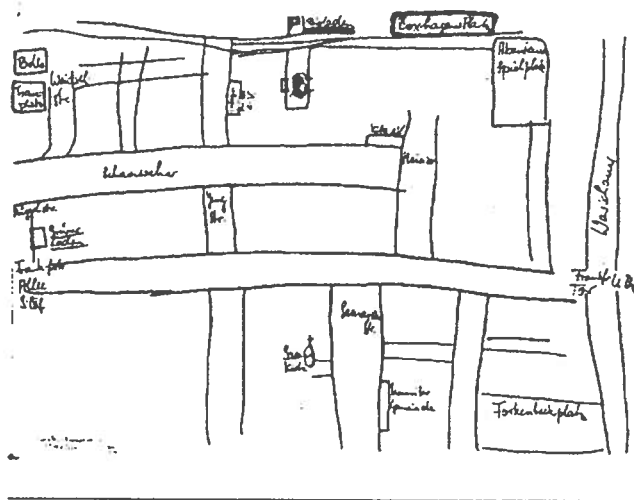
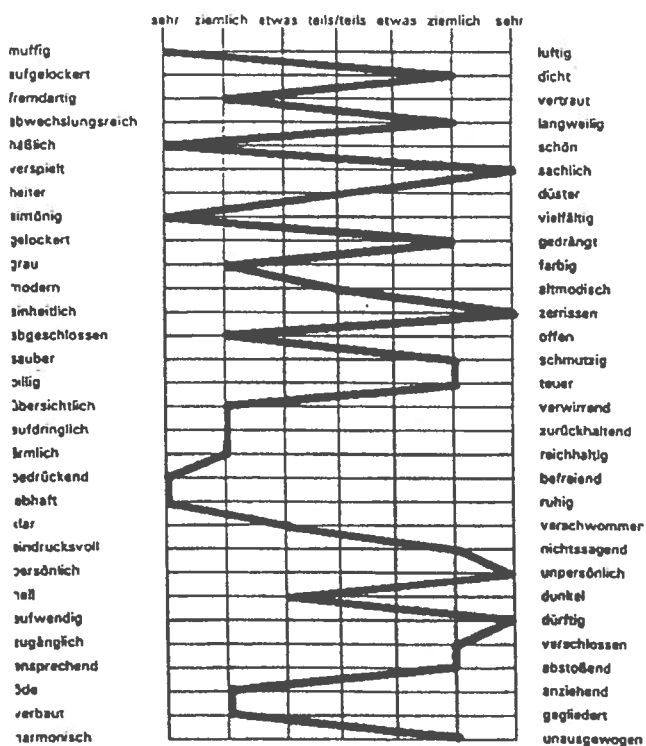
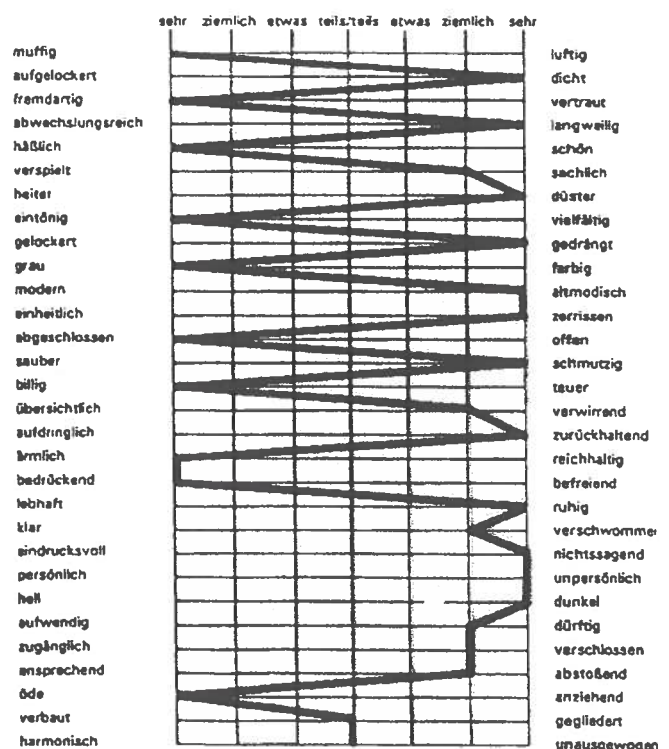


Image-Profiles study area

Mental Maps



Frankfurter Allee



Scharnweberstrasse

3. Patterns of space-related identity formation: Findings and discussion

The fundamental goal of detecting patterns in the typicality of individual space-related identity formation was to find common properties, similarities, and divergence in experiencing space and developing a bond to space.

The findings of the Berlin-Friedrichshain case study show that there are three clearly contrasting groups of interdependencies of identity-forming components. It is, first of all, the social aspects of space perception as focused in space evaluation patterns of differing complexity and intensity that take a key role in identification processes. Dimensions and subscales in the contrasting patterns point to differing topical and compensatory values as well as to potentials and destabilizing tendencies in local development.

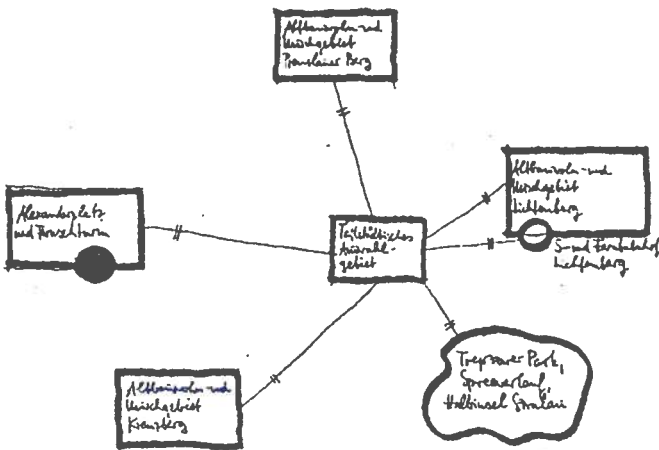
Space perception and evaluation can explain the acceptance of an area as a habitat, and whether or not it is seen as having a promising future. Patterns and levels of approaches to creative action for grass-roots participation in planning (cf. Figs. 9 to 11) result from these interdependencies.

Social aspects of space perception

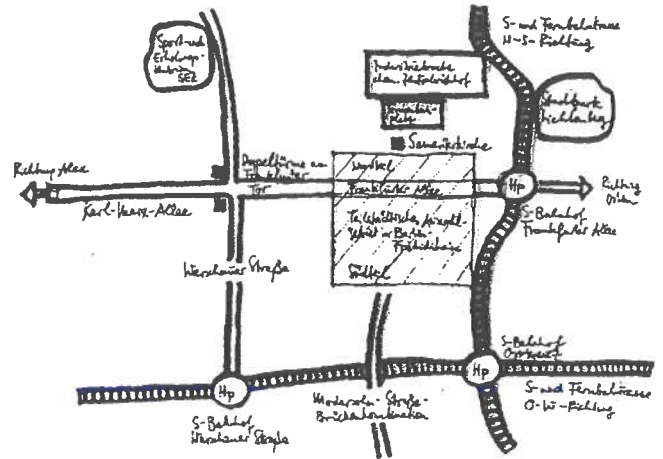
The analysis of social aspects of space-related perception in Berlin-Friedrichshain, carried out at a time of social and architectural change, reveals three general directions.

Complex and differentiated patterns seem to be better suited to give an evaluation of the sphere of orientation, its characterizing areas, potentials and conflicts. Social and town planning change is valued positively as it is reflected as a local development which is an expression of the general situation of radical change. But it may happen that specific sectors are ruled out as destabilizing elements due to loss of function, shape, milieu, and socialization while the whole area is placed in a positive system of values, mainly because of history, use, design, ambient and traditional values or approaches to renewal that integrate existing qualities. Social and architectural change as a result of radical political change is viewed as an opportunity so that the respective area is expected to have a promising future. Typical properties in such cases would be integration in the local network of relations, active participation in local affairs and an unbiased critical eye for problems and potentials. For example, *Group I* is characterized by a complex and differentiated mix of orientation elements (Fig. 7). The space evaluation pattern here shows that urban spaces and town planning aspects are assessed with a clear view of problems and priorities. The dimensions of space evaluation are highly dense and intense. The city district, despite its three characterizing areas, segregationist tendencies, loss of neighborhood relations and deterioration of the social climate, is viewed as having urban development potential and is accepted as a habitat. The range of options for action includes preservation of ambiance, careful development of milieu components, removal of traffic conflicts, functional upgrading by means of function mixing, restoring the original purpose of public spaces and spheres of communication, preservation and reconstruction of older buildings, and preservation of the typical cityscape (Figs. 10; 11 for Group III).

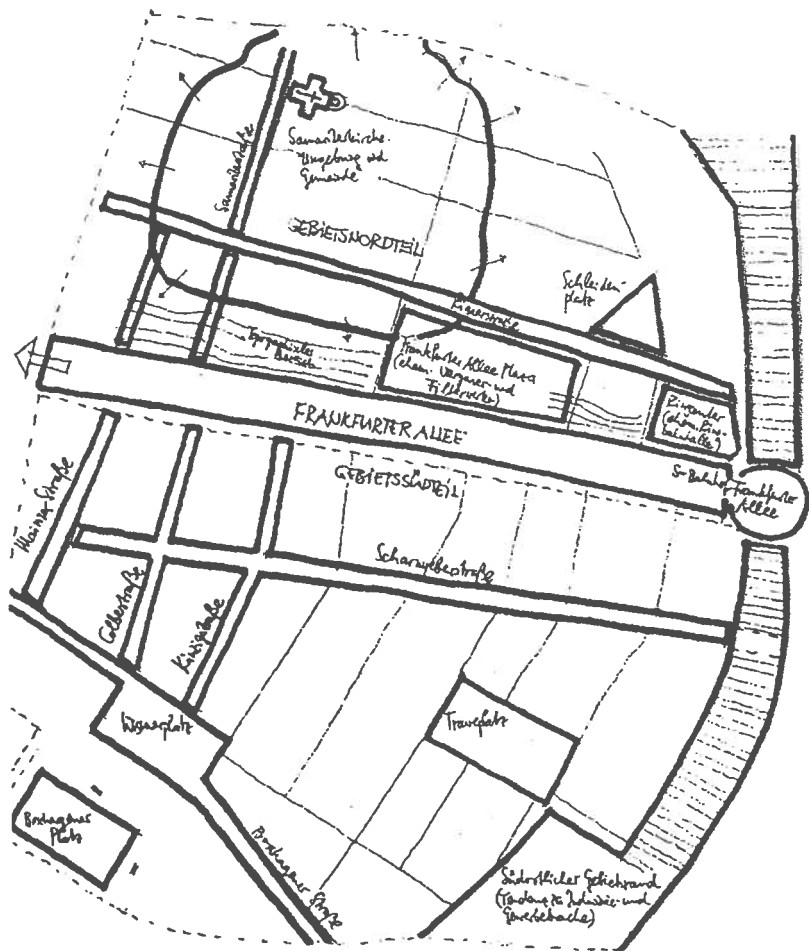
Figure 7: Group I — spatial orientation patterns



Gesamtstädtischer Orientierungsrahmen der Gruppe I

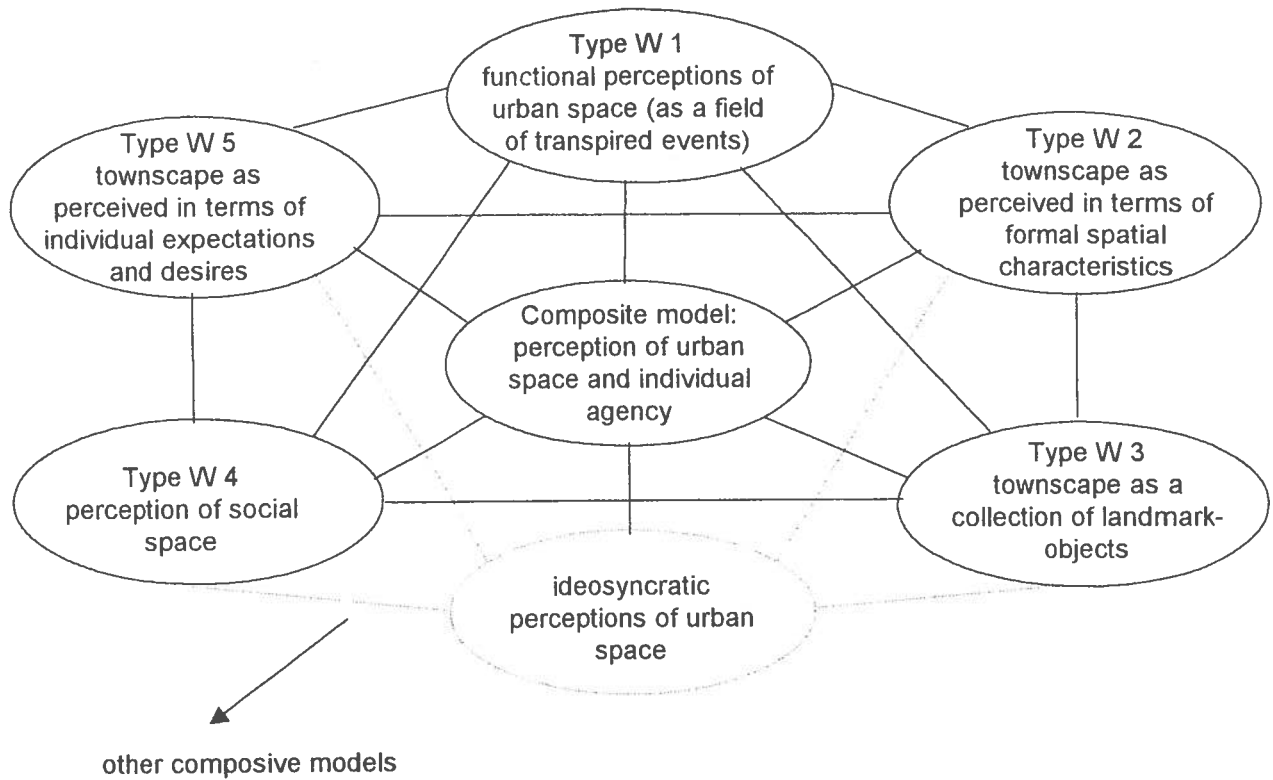


Überlokaler Orientierungsraum der Gruppe I



Der lokale Orientierungsraum der Gruppe I

**Figure 8: Subjective appraisals of urban space —
constituent aspects of individual perception**



**Figure 9: Subjective appraisals of urban space —
constituent aspects of individual mental mapping**

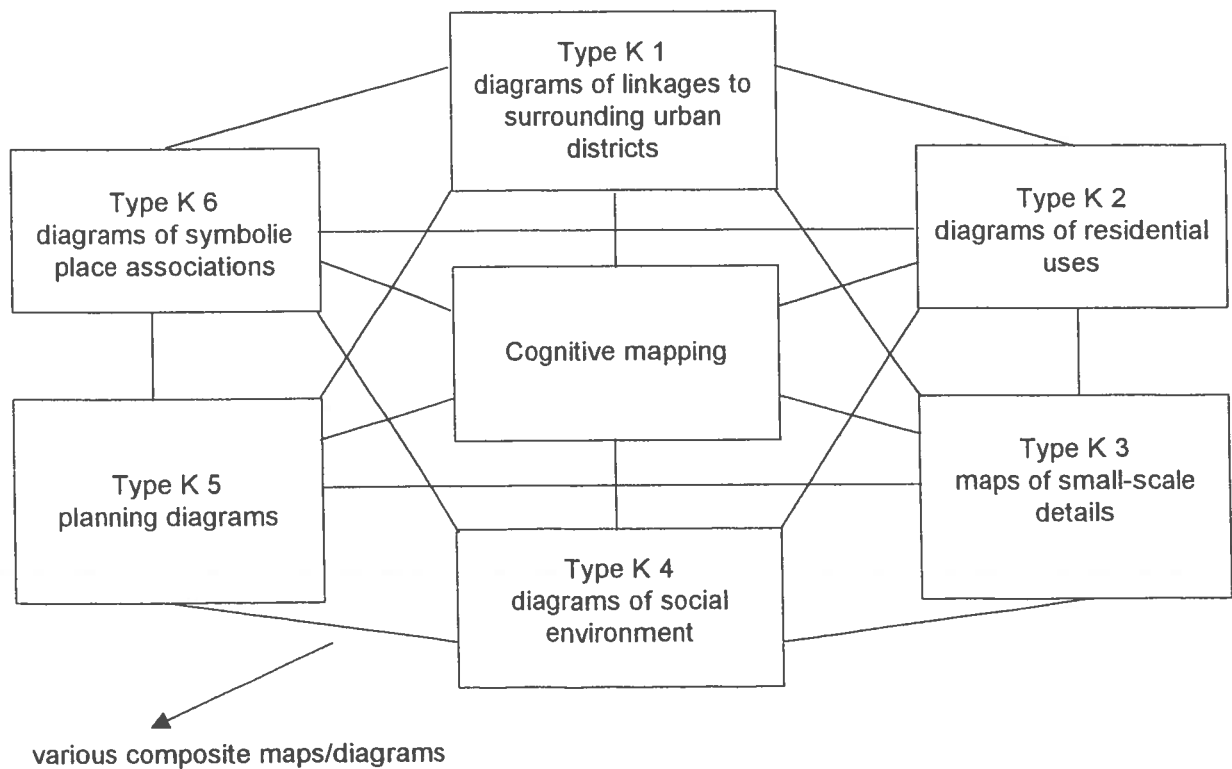


Figure 10: Group I — subjective evaluations of general study district and specific areas (fields of perception)

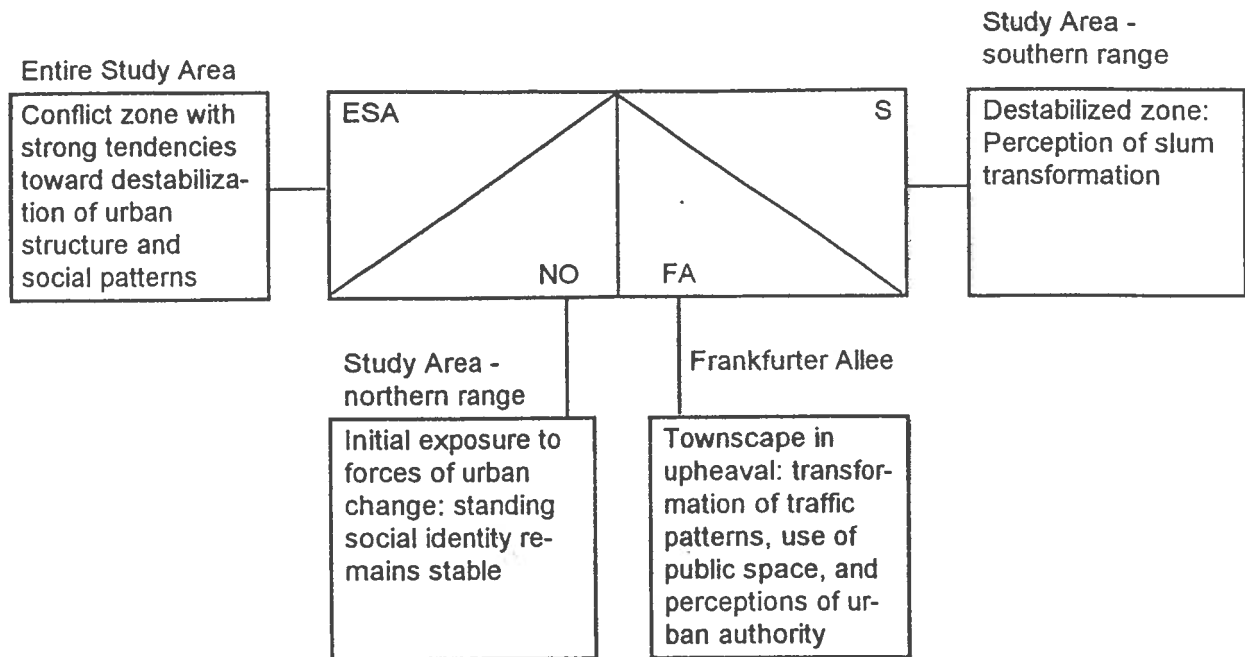


Figure 11: Group III — subjective evaluations of general study district and specific areas (fields of perception)

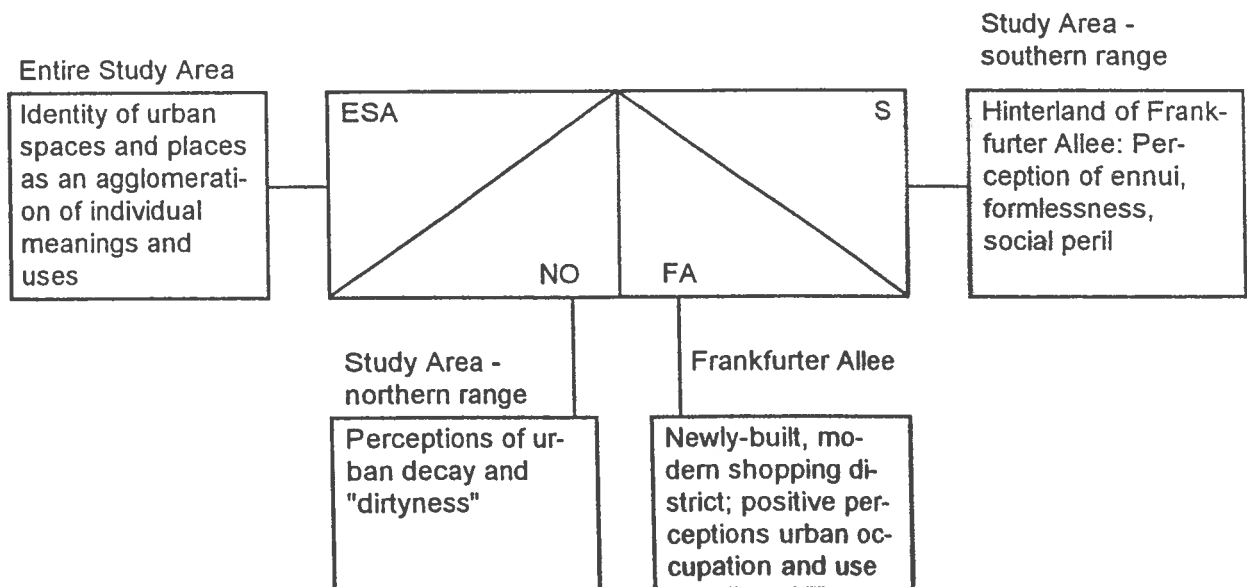
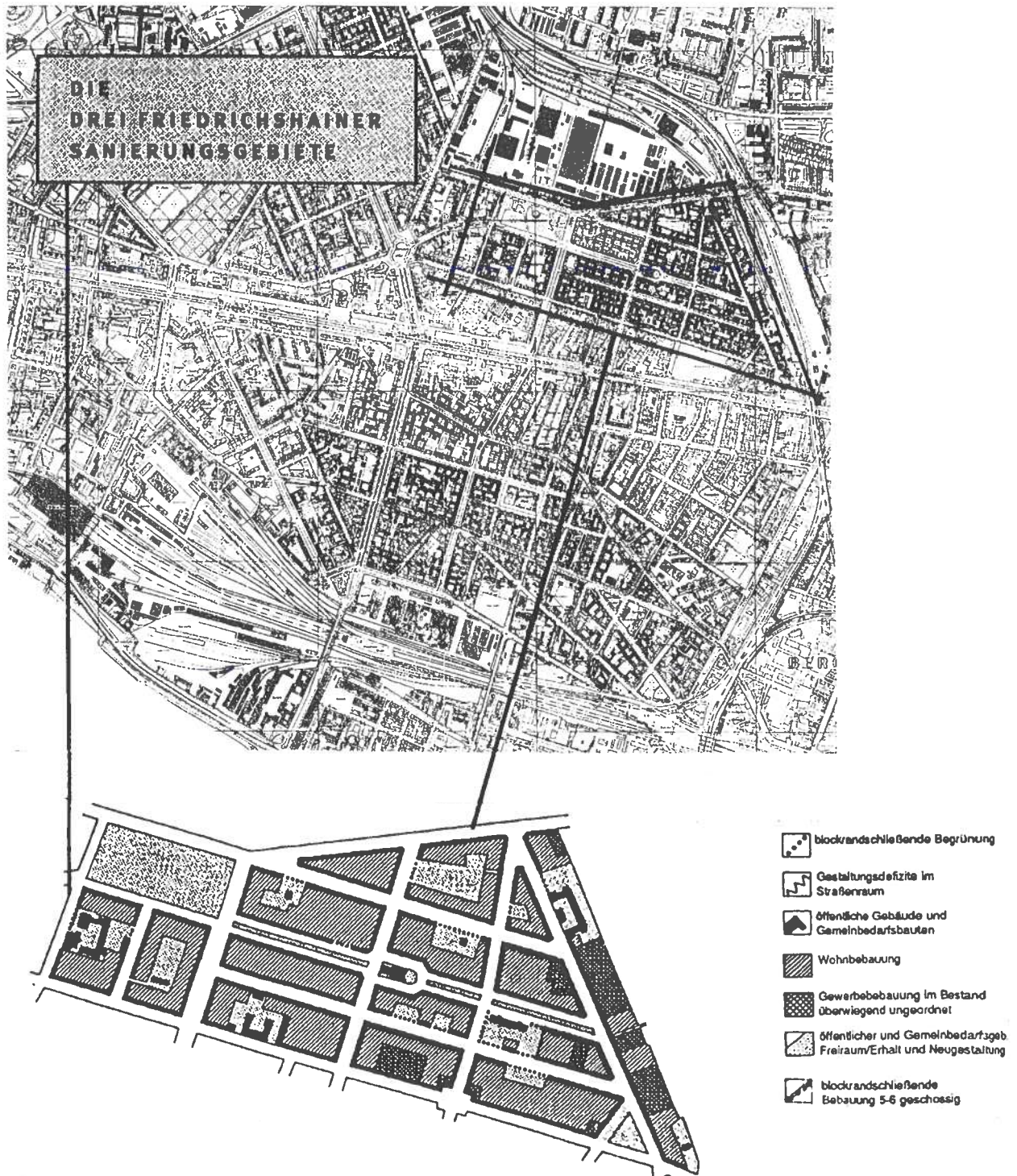


Figure 12: Plans for inner-city-district renewal



Critical space perception and an negative view of local development trends can result in negative judgments of spatial patterns. Although these patterns are also quite dense and intense, they stress destabilizing tendencies and are aimed at preserving historical values and restoring the traditional ambiance rather than at renewal. This is connected with a devaluation of the area's function, shape, and socialization which may result in an individual's loss of bond and his or her resigned and passive presence in the neighborhood. The prospects of the neighborhood are considered dim, and it is neither home nor habitat. Typical phenomena in such cases are mental and emotional alienation, passiveness, a negative attitude towards problems in the spatial and social surroundings, purpose-oriented utilization of the place, and everyday consumption.

Indifferent valuations of the local orientation elements are signs of less differentiated patterns. Social and architectural change is accepted without criticism. The neighborhood is viewed as an anonymous and exchangeable locality or in a range of undifferentiated judgments. Space evaluation is aimed at formal details, products and services offered, spectacular social or spatial change, places that have a personal meaning. Change is accepted uncritically or is anticipated hopefully and enthusiastically. The real layout and ambiance of the place are unimportant. There are characteristic tendencies of adherence to the milieu of origin, or lack of mental and emotional relations in the current neighborhood. Relations with neighbors are as absent as interest in local affairs.

Range of options for action

The more complex and differentiated the perception pattern, the more complex is the evaluation of urban qualities. Options for action in cases like *Group I* are directed at a great number of spatial and functional categories with relevance to local planning. This is particularly true when the assets and potentials of the area in space evaluation patterns take positive values.

Space evaluation patterns dominated by criticism can be as dense and intense as those described above. The critical notes are mainly directed at planners and planning culture. The most prominent demand is for a greater sense of responsibility among planners. Where chances for the fulfillment of this demand by "top-down planning" are rated low there are either tendencies of withdrawal from previous commitment, or people change sides to join the grassroots planning party.

Fragmentary perception and indifferent evaluation result in options for action that should be seen in the context of the immediate surroundings, the residential community or an urban microcosmos. The immediate and sharp view of the urban microcosmos holds a considerable potential for detailed planning. There is, however, a risk of accepting urban planning principles without thinking twice, or of resorting to traditional value systems.

The influence of structural social change on social space perception

Density and intensity of space evaluation and acceptance of the residential surroundings as a habitat are influenced by structural change. This can be seen from the following general statements:

1. Job cuts, shutdowns and declining economic power create massive insecurity which triggers subsistence-saving mechanisms among the residents and diminishes the quality of life. People are facing an alien situation of market forces and mechanisms which was basically unknown before the Wall fell and which entails effects no one had expected.
2. Loss of neighborhood relationships and an aggravation of the social climate are felt as threats for socialization and community life, which culminates in the statement: We are leaving behind our solidarity and are heading for ruthlessness. There is an emotional resistance to become part of a supra-individual pattern that appears to be opaque.
3. Traditional urban planning principles are challenged. The determinist mechanism that was in place before the Wall fell and that consisted of self-sufficient, dictated, and mostly undifferentiated urban planning principles and concepts implemented using simple technologies is increasingly replaced by an apparent variety of forms implemented using perfect industrial technologies. A prominent example is what used to be the *Stalinallee* and today's *Karl-Marx-Allee*, once designed as a big boulevard for the capital of the GDR. What is left of it is now in sharp contrast with modernist development projects in adjacent Frankfurter Allee whose traditional function is challenged as well.
4. This raises the related question of how the new repertoire of forms is received and evaluated. Instead of finding the expected perception patterns (e.g. lookalike prefabs on the fringe of the city or inserted between old buildings to fill gaps in central city districts), people are confronted with new prominent buildings which function as architectural markers and require a different perceptive approach. While evaluating space, people recall values handed down or even lost in their neighborhood and urban environment. This includes use values, historical values, patterning values, personal values, milieu values, and human values as well as losses that have occurred as a result of urban planning conflicts (e.g. deterioration in neighborhood quality). This process of semantic change is highly complex. Orientation elements have mainly remained stable because the spatial structure persists and the socioanthropologically founded continuity of typical shape and perception patterns have strong impacts. They permanently act on the residents' minds. As to social space perception, the reception process refers to subjective interpretation of the individuality and uniqueness of urban space and to the meanings conveyed via the spatial structure and building layout as part of a time- and culture-specific process of change. The process of becoming meaningful is decisive in times of architectural and social change for a positive, negative, or indifferent occupation of spaces and places.
5. Top-down planning does not meet the citizens' expectations with regard to urban development concepts. Before the Wall fell, there was some kind of latent criticism or rather formal consent whereas now we can find uneasiness that is directed against monofunctionality and permanent change of uses in neighborhoods with older buildings or in mixed residential and commercial areas, and against hyper-differentiation and multifunctionality of new blocks of buildings. The new town planning principles remain anonymous. The way in which residents are included in project planning is mostly guided by democratic procedures and not by problems to be solved at a specific place. This is why many residents clearly speak out in favor of grassroots, or bottom-up planning.

4. Problem-oriented participation of citizens within the framework of activating urban renewal: Is there a potential for endogenous urban development?

Talks and meetings with experts from town planning and social planning authorities, tenant consulting services, and with developers engaged in the reconstruction and conservation of buildings were important accompanying measures of our project. At a fairly early stage we had workshop discussions with citizens about the situation, urban development problems and changes in their neighborhood, as well as about use contexts of fundamental research to activate all these elements of endogenous urban planning¹¹ involving many types of public long before we had associations of affected residents in formally defined reconstruction areas. The results were documented and will serve as a basis for further discussions and an influencing factor from the grassroots for concrete integrated concepts for action. As an example, let me

¹¹Cf. Bischoff, Sinning 1995, pp. 12ff.

quote the following excerpt from our 'questionnaire on the situation and existing problems in the neighborhood' and 'ideas aimed at inspiring activities in the neighborhood'.

Questionnaire on the situation and existing problems in the neighborhood (excerpt)

Question: What does urban renewal in Berlin-Friedrichshain mean to you?

Responses: "It certainly doesn't mean placing an area under some sort of glass cover, raise money and building materials and workforce and embellish the place, then remove the glass cover, and a completely new housing complex in shining white has been erected." Reality is different, though: lots of office buildings, hotels and banks are newly erected and lined up like pearls on a chain. The place is empty at night and exudes emptiness. "A cityscape need not necessarily be bulky and swanky. No one can identify with that." . . . "My neighbor told me the other day about a building project: Maybe the environment is not suitable for the building?"

Responses: If you want to do something from the grassroots, you should form a network of many activists who are determined to bring about change. The first questions would be: Which problems must be solved first? Who provides funds for street and backyard renewals in the interest of the residents?

Responses: Use value for, and appeal to, citizens: these are elementary requirements that must be fulfilled to let residents identify with their neighborhood. But isn't our workshop discussion just some kind of therapy for all of us? It is vital to arouse perceptiveness, and we must be determined to act.

Ideas aimed at inspiring activities in the neighborhood (excerpt)

The inspiring ideas included a wealth of creative proposals relating to the neighborhood and potential roles in participation. To give just a few examples:

"A different kind of traffic planning: Give priority to children and old-age pensioners."

Instead of "Test the West" posters: Visualize neighborhood history and stories. Billboard designs in collaboration with residents: what was it like in the past, where are we, and where do we go from here?

Install a mobile "Consulting Center for Social and Cultural Life."

Utilization of open space in the interest of the residents: Bring water and plants into our courtyards.

Turn the street into a stage: Let me be a squatter or street ecologist.

Build a path to "dubious" places in the neighborhood: squatters are part of the neighborhood as well.

5. A note on the utilization and planning context

Our approach to see space-related identity formation as an operating principle of the components *social space perception and evaluation*, *bonding to places*, and *options for action* results in place-related and time-dependent studies, latency and density, structured by the relative persistence of layout and space perception as determined by processes of urban change and development as well as social change. This approach shall be a first step towards exploring this multifaceted process for reflective planning and learn-

ing. This can also be derived from the integrative function of the case study: space-related identity formation is included in an interpretative situation analysis of urban district planning and the development of scenarios that are *adequate for the given situation* resulting from this analysis and from social control variables (models, planning philosophies, policies). Placing the social space, much neglected in social and planning studies, in the center of our research interest entails that we take into account the inherent logic of urban social communities as a planning parameter. This makes our study a part of fundamental research, its results and findings need to be discussed. Planning affinities are most obvious whenever space evaluations and options for action are formulated by residents. Both may be taken as creative proposals for renewal from the grassroots and as indicators of potential success of planning targets (cf. Fig. 11).¹²

The values and objectives expressed in the case study can be assigned to three general strategies of city district planning. The first strategy is aimed at preserving and maintaining the neighborhood. The second is more focused on new developments, in particular when the spatial skeleton and building layout no longer meet the material and functional as well as immaterial requirements. The third strategy is aimed at improved development. Its aim is to cushion conflict potential based on the finding that the traditional spatial structure and the state of repair of the buildings can no longer meet the requirement of accommodating new functions. This constitutes a decisive planning requirement. All three strategies require identification of those areas of a locality in which the spatial structure is in harmony with community and general social requirements or can easily be brought into such harmony without a major urban development effort, and where this is no longer possible. Priorities could be specified on this basis to adequately respond to new requirements in specific areas. This third option bears a great potential for viable urban development that aims at both preserving and transforming historical cultural values, peculiarities and identity features into a new quality. This includes attempting to create a network of heterogeneous local interests at an early point in time to prepare the local ground for a sound development of participation in planning as a process of mutual learning. Town planners should act as mediators between research and citizens' interests. The public needs information which is only accessible to these groups. This transfer of information provides the democratic legitimization of those affected. Transparency of the problem area and awareness enables identification and lets residents act rather than react. The earlier such a process is set in motion the better the chances to initiate urban renewal. But beware: participation of residents in planning problems and tasks takes time, requires the cooperation of planning authorities, social workers and teachers, and it will have to be the political will of the parties involved.

¹²This goal is pursued in Berlin-Friedrichshain by STATTBAU (an urban development company) and ASUM (Working Group for Social Planning and Tenant Consulting Services).

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