Present Borders in Border-Memoryland Berlin

Contemporary in/visible b/ordering dynamics and creative border deconstruction in an urban space

Katinka Schlette
A plea to cherish Berlin’s (still existing) charm

For all who are open to look beneath the visible surface

‘The city must be a place of waste…everything mustn’t be foreseen and functional… the most beautiful cities were those where festivals were not planned in advance, but there was an open space where they could unfold’.

(Lefebvre, 1987: 36)

‘Open spaces give Berlin certain charm. At the moment this charm is being overbuilt’.

(Seemann, interview 18 June 2017)
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Preface

“Jeder Mensch ist ein Künstler” - Joseph Beuys

“Every human being is an artist […],” is what Joseph Beuys asserted in 1972¹, “[…] a freedom being, called to participate in transforming and reshaping the conditions, thinking and structures that shape and inform our lives”. According to Beuys, artist and theorist known in the 60s for emphasising art’s role in shaping society and politics, art can arise from everything – not sooner from painting than from mechanical engineering, cooking or being a doctor. I have come across Beuys’ name at times before in my life, because my father would passionately speak of him or because he is not far from the place where I was born myself. At times of carrying out this master’s research project, it found its way back to me again when my supervisor Dr. Olivier Kramsch cited Beuys’ words in a cross-border Skype-conversation.

Whilst conducting my fieldwork in Berlin for this master’s project around b/ordering dynamics and creative practices I gradually discovered that what I encountered corresponds to a great extent with Beuys’ statement. When reading this thesis you might get a glimpse of what I mean. During the process of writing it, I hope to have become, as Beuys would probably have said, a writing artist, attempting to express my thoughts about borders - what they can be and how they can work - with black ink on white paper. Albeit it took me quite a while to define the actual time, location and space of this research project, the border as overarching theme was there from the start. It was even there long before the start of this master’s, when I crossed the border between two countries twice every day during my childhood or when I was challenged by personal borders which I have now overcome. In many senses, thus, having written this thesis has a meaning to me.

Without the help of many people I could not have done so, which is why I want to thank them all for their time and their patience. At first I want to heartily thank my supervisor Dr. Olivier Kramsch, who taught me that our writing always grows and evolves because our thinking is alive – something that I will always remember. But of course also Dr. Henrik Lebuhn and professor Michiel Lippus for their advice, all City Locality Centre coordinators, all creatives; Georg Klein, Lisa Glauer, Birgit Auf der Lauer and Casper Pauli, Katja Aßmann, Charlotte Danoy Kent, Klara Teigler, Larissa Hermanns, Barbara Caveng, Alice Romoli, Cordula Bienstein, Eva-Luise Volkmann, Hanne Klaas, Pablo Hermann and, all participants of projects I worked with, but especially Marta Lodola for the fruitful collaboration. Also, I want to heartily thank my parents, my grandparents, my siblings, my newly encountered Berlin friends and my friends at home for inspiring me, asking me critical questions, reading my texts and believing in me throughout the whole process. Thank you.

And now, I hope you will enjoy the read.

¹ During his talk at Documenta 5 in Kassel, Germany
Abstract

Most attention in Berlin goes out either to its history of division between East and West Berlin, or to its diverse, exiting and ‘hip’ centre, where ‘everything is possible’. Berlins is often presented as ‘the capital of freedom’, a representation wherein the the supposed freedom of today – ‘in all areas and at all levels’ – is opposed to the city’s divided past. When looking closer however, various bordering and ordering dynamics are present on the stage of urban space Berlin. These borders are not as physically present as the past Berlin Wall, but rather they are intertwined into different levels of life in the city, affecting mostly those people that have been living there the longest and those that do not possess much money or the ‘right’ citizenship. Given their invisible nature, it is not only challenging to put a finger on these present b/ordering dynamics and to show their hierarchical, categorical and excluding consequences. Also identifying the various working mechanisms that create, facilitate, sustain or even exacerbate them, asks for a look behind Berlin’s stage into particular policy instruments and strategies, regulations and rhetoric.

This research deals with the multiple present b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms in Berlin. Furthermore, it explores creative forms of border deconstruction that can contribute to ‘put a finger’ and deal with these complex interwoven dynamics and mechanisms in yet another manner. It does not seek to find precise numbers, but rather it presents stories, opinions and experiences deriving from various places of the city. Used for this aim is a mix of qualitative research methods: ethnographic flâneries, interviews with City Locality Coordinators and various creatives, participations in creative projects, analysations of official Berlin documents and the city website, observations and photography.

The idea is adopted that one should no longer understand the border as a static clear-cut line, but rather as a dynamic process and as a verb; bordering. A process that needs certain symbolisations and imaginations in order to function and have a meaning. By looking at the city as a whole through a border lens, this research provides a unique insight into how developments taking place in different parts of urban space Berlin relate to each other and how various phenomena that are generally studied apart interact, collide and cohere. Rather than zooming into one specific place of phenomenon, it thus offers a look on ‘the bigger picture’. Thereby, it sheds light on those developments and dynamics that should gain more attention, because they rather invisibly border and order the various areas and actors on the stage of urban space Berlin today.
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<th>Description</th>
<th>English Translation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BAMF</td>
<td>Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge</td>
<td>Federal Office for Migration and Refugees</td>
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<tr>
<td>BWT</td>
<td>Berlin Wall Trail</td>
<td>Berliner Mauerweg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BENN</td>
<td>Berlin Entwickelt Neue Nachbarschaften</td>
<td>Berlin Develops New Neighborhoods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAF</td>
<td>Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten</td>
<td>National Office for Refugee Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MIS</td>
<td>Masterplan für Integration und Sichterheit</td>
<td>Masterplan for Integration and Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSD</td>
<td>Migrationsozialdienst</td>
<td>Migration Social Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MUF</td>
<td>Modulare Unterkunft für Flüchtlinge</td>
<td>Modular Accommodation for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OKK</td>
<td>Organ kritische Kunst</td>
<td>Organ of Critical Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>STZ</td>
<td>Stadtteilzentrum</td>
<td>City Locality Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CLC</td>
<td>City Locality Coordinator</td>
<td>StadtteilkoordinatorIn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QM</td>
<td>Quartiersmanagement</td>
<td>Quarter Management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZKR</td>
<td>Zentrum für Kunst und öffentlichen Raum</td>
<td>Centre for Art and Public Space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ZK/U</td>
<td>Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik</td>
<td>Centre for Art and Urbanistics</td>
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1 | Introduction

1.1 Researching contemporary borders and creative action in urban space Berlin

It was directly whilst conducting the first ethnographic *flânerie* through urban space Berlin when a large billboard at the Schillingbrücke (see *Plate 1*) caught my attention that could, in a sense, be considered the starting point of this project. It was a billboard which, interestingly enough, was not likewise others meant to sell a certain product or activity but instead, it seemed to sell an idea. By using the text ‘done with walls’, the hashtag ‘FreiheitBerlin’ and the well-known photograph capturing hundreds of people that gather around and on top of the fallen Berlin Wall at the *Brandenburger Tor* on the ninth of November 1989, it ought to sell the idea of Berlin as a city where the previous division belongs to history and the present is full of freedom.

Some research online taught me that the poster belonged to a campaign of beBerlin\(^2\). It is named #FreiheitBerlin (transl.: FreedomBerlin) because “the freedom that is present in all areas of the city” is ‘what sets Berlin apart’ and stronger yet, what makes it ‘the capital of freedom’. This freedom, the explanation goes on, is present ‘at all levels’ in the city and is primarily evident in ‘the personal freedom of each individual’.

\(^2\) beBerlin (German: seiBerlin) is the state’s official signet used to “shine a spotlight on Berlin’s diversity” (https://www.sei.berlin.de/en/).
As I was just about to delve into my research project about current b/ordering dynamics in the city, I asked myself the following questions: Should Berlin be named ‘the capital of freedom’ because it is the place where we have learned that ‘walls are never a good idea’? Does the absence of the physical division by walls naturally mean the freedom ‘in every conceivable dimension’?³

A closer look at the view of the Friedrichshain riverside directly behind the billboard shows already a spectacle of various aspects coming together on a stage full of contrasts; an empty building with on its façade graffiti protesting against ‘Mediaspree’⁴, right next to a much newer modern building and one of the countless construction cranes in the city. A huge portrait graffiti-advertisement of the large clothing brand Levi’s, next to a responding graffiti work depicting men on horses that target at the Levi’s portrait with bow and arrow. And, looking closer to the Spree bank, the screaming statements ‘Refugees Welcome!!’ and ‘We are all people’. This spectacle, in a sense, serves as a concentrate of what I was about to find out, is happening on the stage of the city Berlin. A stage of interplay between different actors with contrasting views, intentions, goals and needs embedded in the past as well as in the present. A stage which is, hence, not solely filled with freedom ‘in all areas’ and ‘at all levels’ but also with divisions, borders and walls – be they not as physical anymore.

The photograph demonstrates the relevance and actuality of a qualitative exploration of precisely those divisions, borders and walls within the urban space. Dynamics that are not necessarily visible at first sight and whose functioning is often more hidden in their working mechanisms of certain (re)presentations, legitimizations, imaginations and symbolizations – called the borders’ imaginative apparatus by Paasi (2011). This hiddenness however, does not solve the problematic hierarchies, categories and the exclusions that the borders and their consequences bring about. A central part of this research project is therefore, to put into question the imaginative apparatus of campaigns like #FreiheitBerlin and lurking behind the curtain of the visible surface; namely to explore what visible and invisible (or: in/visible) bordering and ordering (or: b/ordering) dynamics are present in urban space Berlin today.

In our ‘network society’ (Castells, 2000) borders have acquired “a new kind of centrality” (Agier, 2016: 8). Not only are borders hardening in the physical form (Newman and Paasi, 1998; Paasi, 2009) – think of boundary walls and fences on the edges of Europe’s nation states – they are also vacillating at different points within societies and, as Balibar (1998; 2003; 2009) and other scholars (Broeders, 2007; Dijstelbloem et al., 2011) argue, have multiplied into many invisible internal borders “some of which are not located close to the official international boundary itself” (Brambilla et al, 2016: 3) but run through Europe’s societies, regions and cities. These invisible internal borders can take on different forms.

This research project focuses on the internal borders that run through cities; through an urban

³ See website of the blog: https://presentbordersinbordermemorylandberlin.wordpress.com/
⁴ Mediaspree is one of the largest property investment projects in Berlin which aims to establish media companies along a section of the Spree)
space. In the case of urban space Berlin, where so much attention is placed upon the Berlin Wall as the strongly physical and visible border of the past that turns the city into a *border-memoryland* (Cochrane, 2006; Ladd, 2008; Sternberg and Schrag, 2013; Ward, 2011), it is especially important to also shed light on the less material and visible b/ordering dynamics that are present in the city today and are not solely shaped by past events (Ward, 2011). This shedding of light will not only take place through the study of the b/ordering urban dynamics themselves, but also through exploring creative practices⁵ that themselves can potentially contribute to this shedding of light and to deconstructing the b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms.

Aside from being located in the field of critical border studies, this research project is thus to be placed in the marginal yet upcoming field where politics and aesthetics collide (Brambilla et al, 2016) called *art geopolitics* by geographer Szary (2012). As pointed out by a handful of scholars (Berelowitz, 1997; Brambilla et al, 2016; DellÁgnese and Szary, 2015; Giudice and Giubilaro, 2015: 84; Ingram, 2011; Szary, 2012), artistic practices have the potential to serve as a means to not only unmask powerful illusions that national states and their ideological apparatus have hidden within and beside the representation of borders, but also to open up a new space of possibility and transformation and to contribute to the understanding of borders. The by Schimanski and Wolfe edited book *Border Aesthetics: Concepts and Intersections* (2017) that was published just before the start of the fieldwork of this project, shows the recently growing interest, search and longing of also a larger amount of scholars to approach borders from another angle.

Moreover, by not solely academically writing and researching about borders but also including these creative deconstructions and alternative comprehensions of borders, this study furthermore contributes to bridge yet another border, namely the border between academic theory and practice ‘on the ground’. Through this, at the same time, it will not solely focus on ‘the problem’, but on possible ‘solutions’.

### 1.2 Research objectives and questions

This research project focuses on contemporary b/ordering dynamics and creative practices in urban space Berlin. Through conducting a multi-method qualitative study, it seeks to acquire a deeper understanding of the various forms in which internal borders can manifest themselves and are experienced in the urban space. By taking a post structural stance on borders, it bases itself in the field of *critical* border studies wherein a multidimensional perspective of borders is of great importance (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2009; Rumford, 2012). This means that the border is understood as a verb (b/ordering) and the main concern is the how-question of borders.

To capture the ‘changing perspective of what borders are’ (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 583) the concept of the border will be opened up and taken as a starting point for qualitative

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⁵ In this thesis the concept ‘creative practices’ will be used, as it arose from the data that were assembled in the field that in a context of ‘border deconstruction’ the concept of ‘art’ should not be understood too narrow.
interviews, walks, observations and participations. This will leave room for a broader and more inclusive understanding of borders and their various forms and mechanisms. Furthermore, it seeks to investigate what taking the border as a starting point will bring in terms of intersectionality between other processes. Moreover, through simultaneously participating in- and speaking with people that are performing creative practices, this project aims to build further on the existing explorations in the field of *art geopolitics* (Szary, 2012). By investigating what kind of creative practices could potentially contribute to shed the light on borders and their mechanisms and in what ways they could do so, it seeks to pull both border studies and art out of their self-contained, isolated corners and bring them together.

More broadly, this project aims to innovatively shed light on- and create awareness about those bordering mechanisms that are not visible at first sight but strongly present ‘just around the corner’ in our everyday life. It attempts to discover what creative practice can bring to the discipline of border studies, geography and socio-political studies in general from yet another angle.

In order to achieve these objectives, a central research question has been composed that reads as follows:

**What are the contemporary in/visible b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin and how can creative practices potentially contribute to deconstruct and shed light on these b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms?**

In order to make the answering of the main question achievable, this question is divided into four sub-questions that together address the exploration of the in/visible b/ordering dynamics and creative practices in urban space Berlin. These sub-questions are answered through the use of primary and secondary data deriving from expert interviews, informal conversations, ethnographic walks, observations, participations, museum visits, Berlin official documents and websites and scientific literature, and read as follows:

1. **What contemporary in/visible b/ordering dynamics are present in urban space Berlin?**

Whilst being aware of the various possible forms and mechanisms that the b/ordering dynamics could have, reading innovative geographers and border scholars on the changing nature and internal multiplication of contemporary borders as a first source of data will provide a focus and a frame for the execution of the following methods that will be used to answer this question: ethnographic *flânerie* (walks) in the urban space, ethnographic observations and photographing whilst attending conferences, workshops, discussions, city walks, museums and centres, conducting expert interviews and informal conversations and reading and analysing official documents, media articles, documentaries and various information plates in inside and open-air exhibitions.
II. What are the working mechanisms of these contemporary in/visible b/ordering dynamics?

Through this question the investigation delves deeper into the working mechanisms of the b/ordering dynamics identified through the first sub-question. It will deconstruct their imaginative apparatus (Paasi, 2009); unravel and shed light on their hidden intents. To answer this question, representations, frames, discourses and imaginations in official Berlin documents and websites and media articles will be analysed. Furthermore, the data assembled through the ethnographic observations and flânerie as well as through the interviews and informal conversations contributes to this.

III. Which creative practices contribute to deconstruct and shed light on these in/visible b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms?

Simultaneous to the (re)searching of the contemporary b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms, various arts, art projects, artists and other creative practices that potentially can contribute to the deconstruction and shedding light on these dynamics are explored through the methods of ethnographic observations and photographs in museums, centres and the urban space, interviewing creatives, informal conversations and participating in creative projects.

IV. How can these creative practices deconstruct and shed light on these in/visible b/ordering dynamics?

This left-to-be-answered how-question is answered mainly through the regular participation in a selection of creative practices (see paragraph 3.3.3), having informal conversations whilst doing so and conduction more specified interviews with creatives who, in different manners, concern themselves with various forms of borders. Additionally, the aforementioned ethnographic observations and photographs in museums, centres and the urban space will complement these methods.

1.3 Scientific relevance

As the majority of contributions about Berlin are, as German social scientists Bernt, Grell and Holm (2013) argue, “concerned with rather specific phenomena and neglect […] a fuller understanding of the city as a whole (ibid.: 12), this research project attempts to explore the urban space Berlin holistically instead of focussing on solely one area or one phenomenon. This will help to make conclusions about the living conditions of most Berlin residents, something that the majority of studies is lacking as they, through studying particular situations like the squats movement, the many community gardens, memorial sites of the wall or the argument over the rebuilding of the Prussian City Palace which, indeed, belong to Berlin, often focus on internal perspectives deriving from the particular situation, but omit contextual conditions and comprehensive processes (ibid.). In addition,
by taking a holistic approach, this research project will not, like these studies, be “in danger of exoticising Berlin’s situations and contributing to an unreflected hype (aka ‘Berlin: the city of unlimited possibilities’)” (Bernt et al., 2013: 13).

Taking the concept of the border as a starting point makes the holistic approach a less shaky shot in the dark of the complex and large urban space by giving it a specific focus. Moreover, it makes this project innovative as it will bring new knowledge concerning the intersectionality of various processes and mechanisms that are rarely studied in conjunction, but now come together through the use of the ‘border theme’ as a base.

Furthermore, this research project will contribute to the ‘most immediate task for an approach to border studies’ (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2009) by understanding borders as dynamic social constructs – rather than using the static visual representation of the border that still inspires most works and reproduces dominant geopolitical practice (Van Houtum, 2012: 407) – and capturing “the changing perspective on what borders are supposed to be and where they may be supposed to lie” (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 583). By opening up the concept of the border towards how it is present and experienced in the field, this project is receptive of all its possible new forms and place.

Lastly, positioned at the crossroads of socio-political and cultural studies, this project will delve into the so-called ‘politics-aesthetics nexus’ (Brambilla et al, 2016) by connecting border theory with contemporary artistic practices. It thereby contributes to the development of the marginal, yet upcoming field of art geopolitics (Szary, 2012). Up until now, the cases in which art in relation to borders is explored are positioned in the context or influence of national, often material borders. With the focus of this research project being the often invisible internal b/ordering dynamics, a new relevant question arises. Namely the question of where, what and how art is practiced in such a dynamic internal border-context?

1.4 Societal relevance

“Berlin belongs to the whole world”
(Merian Berlin, 2013: 3)

Coming from a recent travel guide, this sentence paradigmatically symbolises Berlins position as the so-called ‘cosmopolitan metropolis’ and the ever growing international interest – be it of foreign investors, young professionals, students, artists, or tourists – in the German capital. Simultaneously, since the fall of the wall

“Berlin is the (and often literally the building) site on which a new Germany is being constructed [...] by attempts to reinterpret and reimagine its history: it is a city of memorials and of deliberate absences; of remembering and forgetting, or trying to forget; of reshaping the past as well as trying to build a new future. The juxtapositions of urban experience, the
layering of memories and the attempt to imagine a different future, come together to define Berlin as a contemporary capital city” (Cochrane, 2006; 5).

Whereas the city is presented as the ideal ‘cosmopolitan’ and ‘hip’ capital which is ‘free in all its areas and levels’, the reality is, as derives from this quote, a lot more complex and less picture-perfect. As you are about to read in this thesis, the urban space Berlin is full of visible and hidden bordering and ordering dynamics – around issues ranging from international investments, drunken tourists and gentrification processes to pressure on the housing market, displacements, a large contrast between poverty and wealth, and debates around the ‘right to the city’ – deriving from a large variety of different actors with contrasting views, intentions, goals and needs that are embedded in the past as well as in the present. These dynamics result in many contradictions and have hierarchical, categorizing, segregating and hence problematic consequences.

Evidently, these issues are interrelated; they do not take place isolated from each other. Hence, in this seemingly jigsaw puzzle, an attempt to qualitatively explore how they coincide (with the border concept as a starting point) and how Berlin residents experience them in their neighbourhoods is a relevant task. The simultaneous discovery trip into the world of arts, art projects, artists and other creative practices that implicitly or explicitly concern themselves with the bordering dynamics in question helps to carry out this exploration as it offers a relevant new perspective from yet another angle in the field.

Hence, through this project, the problematic b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin, that are often hidden by their complex mechanisms or their immaterial nature and rarely looked at as an interconnected whole, receive a relevant beam of light. The findings will be relevant also for other urban context where there are undoubtedly b/ordering dynamics ‘right around the corner’ too.

1.5 Structure of this thesis

This thesis follows a clear structure and contains seven chapters. The first chapter introduced the topic, formulated the problem and explained the relevance of this research project. The second chapter gives an overview of the state-of-the-art theories that are relevant for the following empirical chapters. The third chapter provides the methodological framework, the chosen methods for data collection and reflects upon the researcher’s positionality as well as on possible limitations of this research project. Chapter four is the first empirical chapter and discusses those b/ordering dynamics that are present in urban space Berlin today (sub-question I.). Then the second empirical chapter, chapter five, will delve deeper into the working mechanisms, the imaginative apparatus (Paasi, 2009), of these b/ordering dynamics, by describing the underlying reasons for the b/ordering dynamics that are experienced in the urban space (sub-question II.). The last empirical chapter, chapter six, focuses on various creative practices, the differing ways in which they explicitly or implicitly concern themselves with urban b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms, and most importantly; how they contribute to
deconstruct and shed light on them (sub-question III. and IV). This thesis is concluded by chapter seven, that reflects on all empirical findings in respect to the existing academic theory, and answers the main research question. Recommendations of the researcher and from the ‘experts’ in the field, as well as reflections are also shared in this final chapter.
2 Theoretical framework

2.1 Changing border perspectives: B/ordering debates

Contrary to the forecast of the general globalisation discourse which was prevalent during the late 1980s and early 1990s and spoke of a new ‘borderless’ world in which barrier impact of borders would become negligible (Shapiro and Alker, 1996), the study of borders underwent a renaissance during the late 1990s and early 2000s (Newman, 2006a; 2006b; Newman and Paasi, 1998). Up until today, this renaissance does not seem to have lost its actuality. Today’s borders are hardening physically, in the form of boundary walls and fences – at the moment there are four times as many physical barriers in the world compared to the period of the Berlin Wall (Tomlinson, 2015) – and unphysical, in the form of stricter visa politics (Neumayer, 2006; Salter, 2006), border controls (Van Houtum, 2010), digital databases (Broeders, 2007) and migration deals (Lucassen and Van Houtum, 2016).

The study of borders is a ‘vast and thriving’ field that is concerned with the widely different, sometimes incompatible, and constantly changing defections of the border (Rosello and Wolfe, 2017: 1). The state of this research area is constantly evolving and reaches into many disciplines. Important to mention here is the shift from a modern to a more critical or postmodern perspective marked by the late 1980s and early 1990s. Gradually, the essentialist concept of the border as a clear-cut separation line became accompanied by the concept of b/ordering (Brambilla et al., 2016: 1). Borders became understood as more dynamic and social processes and practices, whereas the classical border studies had understood them as natural ‘frontiers’, as devices to mark territorial power and territories and where mainly concerned with the where-question of borders. Hence, the so-called ‘critical’ border scholars identified the need to deconstruct this value-free construction of the border as well as the value-free representations, identifications and performativity it is provided with in popular culture and stereotypes. With the main concern to read geopolitical and media narrations, stories and discourse in, among others, movies, cartoons and maps and to emphasise the acts and practices of bordering, the how-question of borders became the main focus. Thus, the border became looked at as an active verb (Van Houtum et al., 2005). Subsequently the need for a simultaneous ‘multiperspectival study’ of borders was pronounced (Rumford, 2012).

Considering this research project uses the b/ordering concept to study a city’s dynamics, the b/ordering concept deserves a closer look. According to Van Houtum and Naerssen (2001), b/ordering determines what is to be included and excluded, how the lie of land, the group, the discipline or the self is composed, and what the border communicates. In the prologue of their book B/ordering Space, Van Houtum, Kramsch and Zierhofer define b/ordering as:
“[…] the strategic fabrication and control of a bounded sphere of connectivity, constitutes a reality of (affective) orientation, power and ease, thereby expressing desire for protective distance from the outside world” (2005, 3).

Since the shift towards a critical postmodern perspective of borders a large variety of innovative concepts has been coined by different scholars.

Another alternative approach to understanding the border as a natural line is the ‘borderscapes’ concept, which is built upon the notion of the landscape to describe the area through which the borders run (Dell’Agnese and Szary, 2015). The concept has the critical potential to explain the complex and dynamic relation between the persistence of old boundaries and the increased numbers of new forms of the borders’ functions and practices in the context of globalisation (Brambilla, 2015a).

“Borderscapes resemble a fluid terrain of a multitude of political negotiations, claims, and counter-claims that are actualised at the level of everyday practice” (ibid.:139) and contribute to liberate border thinking of the (geo)political imagination from the ‘territorialist imperative’ burden (Brambilla, 2014).

Furthermore, became acknowledged that borders can stretch in time and place. For that one half of the population that borders apply to differently (Van Houtum, 2010), they can become more than solely crossing points. They can transform into waiting zones of uncertainty and liminality between here and there (there and here) where time stretches and a period of indefinite status of the people who are located in them prolongs. Anthropologist Agier writes about this situation and refers to it in the title of his book Borderlands (2016).

2.2 The border’s changing nature: Towards internal in/visible borders

With the shift in border studies resulting in the understanding of borders as more than clear-cut lines, what became also gradually recognised is that borders do not only exist where one nation state ends and the other begins. Political philosopher Etienne Balibar (2003) was the first to famously state that ‘borders are vacillating’, by which he meant that rather than disappearing in the era of globalisation, borders are moving and multiplying at different points within societies. According to him, today’s Europe itself is a Borderland (2009; 2015).

Internal bordering processes have generated multiple borderscapes “some of which are not located close to the official international boundary itself” (Brambilla et al 2016, 3). Therefore, the multiplication and moving of borders challenges the where-question of the border, whose location is constantly displaced, negotiated and interwoven within all areas and levels of society (Brambilla 2015, 19). Additionally, these internal borders are not of a physical and visible nature. This means that functioning mechanisms are often hidden in imaginations and symbolisations. As also Rumford recognises; European ‘borderwork’ is made up from a fluid assemblage of functions, mechanisms and actors in the everyday life of citizens (2008; Bialasiewicz, 2012). In sum, the identifying, localising and exploring of the borders that run through Europe’s societies, regions and cities and their
functioning mechanisms is a challenging task for a border scholar and any other social scientist.

Albeit the shift in border studies, from border to bordering and from recognising national to also recognising internal borders, the static visual representation of the border still inspires most works in the field of border studies and reproduces dominant geopolitical practice (Van Houtum, 2012: 407). This natural presentation of borders is problematic as it works to legitimise their policies and functioning mechanisms, whereas it hides their hierarchical consequences. As Giudice and Giubilaro (2015: 81) write, using a line can be a powerful instrument of reduction and works to transform complex border practices into marks of separation that are supposedly objective.

2.3 The border’s ‘imaginative apparatus’

In order to shed light on the complex and often not materially visible internal borders, their working mechanisms and their hierarchical consequences, it is necessary to unpack them. This includes looking beneath the surface, into the symbolization and imagination of the border.

That imagination plays a large role in in the ways certain places and spaces are perceived and that it is created through certain imagery, texts and discourse was mentioned over three decades ago by geographer Edward Said, who coined the concept of ‘imaginative geographies’ in his book Orientalism (1979). According to Said, the complexity of geographies is that they are about the physical and the non-physical dynamics, which he famously described as follows:

“Just as none of us is outside or beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography. That struggle is complex and interesting because it is not only about soldiers and cannons but also about ideas, about forms, about images and imaginings” (Said, 1993:7).

The concept was further build upon by Gregory (1995) who explored the ways in which social life is embedded in these imaginatively contracted places, spaces and landscapes. Also Giudice and Giubilaro (2015: 93) agree that imagination is political and has always a powerful performative force.

Today, it is recognised that, in order to obtain and maintain meaning, borders need a certain degree of symbolization and imagination. Only the use of narrations and images will transform them into real instruments of definition and separation that reproduce exclusion, difference and inequality, be they physical or imagined (Giudice and Giubilaro, 2015: 83).

Paasi (2011:13) calls the ingredients for this meaning the ‘imaginative apparatus’ of the border. The ‘imaginative apparatus’ hides the real meanings and intents of the border and stretches into different media and strategies such as literary landscape, iconography, film, information-, and mindscapes (Paasi, 2011: 13). The fundamental task in border phenomenology is to identify and deconstruct the meanings and intents that the ‘imaginative apparatus’ of borders hides (Paasi in Giudice and Giubilaro, 2015: 83). In order to carry out this fundamental task in the case of the ‘fluid
assemblage of functions, mechanisms and actors’ (Rumford 2008; Bialasiewicz) that Europe’s internal borders consist of, one this needs to be attentive to various places, actors and levels.

Recognised also is that there where an ‘imaginative apparatus’ is used to construct a border, there are simultaneously imaginings that resist, question and counter the border’s being in various ways – often by shedding light on how the everyday life reality of living with the dividing, unequal and exclusive consequences of these bordering practices looks like. The representational field of the border’s ‘imaginative apparatus’ is always a scape of controversial meaning where connotations, values and functions of the border are continuously questioned and negotiated (Giudice and Giubilaro, 2014). As Giudice and Giubilaro (2014: 83) write:

“Imagining of other borders means not only unmasking some powerful illusions that national states and their ideological apparatus have hidden within and beside the representation of borders as objective and localisable lines, but also opening up a new space of possibility and transformation.”

Creative practices might belong to the actions that contribute to the ‘imagining of other borders’ by questioning, negotiating and unmasking the border’s ‘imaginative apparatus’ and opening up a new space of possibility.

2.4 B/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin

As one of the many places in society where the internal ‘vacillating’ borders run through, the urban space Berlin forms the specific location for this research project. When exploring urban spaces and the construction of urban borders it is important to take into account both, the contextual historical dimension as well as the complex strategies of bordering that take place within the contemporary city, writes Lazzarini (2016).

Regarding the contextual historical dimension in the case of urban space Berlin, it is naturally important to take into account the history of the Second World War and the subsequent Cold War period during which the Berlin Wall was a very physically present border that ran through the city in influenced the daily urban life. These past events continue to be present in the urban space today.

Sternberg and Schrag write how the city came to function as a symbol of World War II and the Cold War (Sternberg and Schrag, 2013). The recovery of these past experiences is central to the practices of an emergent memory culture in the contemporary city (Ward, 2016) which makes their continuous presence physical in public space. Meier (2016) writes on how memorials, often located on a former frontline, figure as borderscapes telling narratives of memories and resistance that have, in a sense, turned into ghosts from the past in the present city landscape.

The continuous presence of the historical divide however, figures also in more imagined, rather invisible ways. Several scholars speak of the so-called ‘Mauer im Kopf’ (transl.: wall in the head), by which the enduring cultural and psychological divisions between the residents of the eastern
and the western part of the city are meant (Ward, 2011). Furthermore, scholars have described that the former Eastern and Western parts of Berlin continue to differ in terms of wealth, diversity and atmosphere (Mayer, 2014).

Furthermore, Ward (2011) writes that the city has faced many new frontiers and boundaries on social, economic, architectural and infrastructural levels, whilst working to overcome its divided past. However, neither Ward nor other Berlin-concerned social scientists, elaborate on the city’s b/ordering dynamics in a holistic and clear manner. One can only guess what they are on the bases of the various addressed themes of rather specific case studies (Bernt, Grell and Holm, 2013). So current b/ordering issues in urban space Berlin could, for example, revolve around certain neighbourhoods’ reputations and situations, language borders, borders of access to certain means based on citizenship, spatial exclusion through certain locations for housing migrants or refugees, surveillance borders, the right to the city, squat movements, investments, gentrification, rent politics, housing and urban planning. A critical exploration that studies the ‘cosmopolitan metropole’ as a whole and connects various urban (b/ordering) dynamics is needed (ibid.).

2.6 Creative border deconstruction

The politics-aesthetics nexus is a field of study that has been developing since the last century (Brambilla et al 2016). In the geographic and geopolitical discipline, the aforementioned term ‘aesthetic imagining’ coined by Wright in 1959, market the start of the endeavour to further explore this intersection (ibid.). Said’s concept of ‘imaginative geographies’ (1979) and the work of Gregory that builds further upon that (1995) can serve as further signpost towards this direction.

A more specific focus as well as a broader recognition and exploration of what creative practice could contribute to border studies and what role it might have within the shifting and changing nature of borders and bordering practices, remains rather marginal until today. The majority of scholars who are concerned with this specific intersection argue that “[p]olitical implications of border imaginaries are closely interwoven with aesthetic activity” (Brambilla et al, 2016) and that so-called ‘border art’ is a decisive field of inquiry for geopolitics because of “the prominent role of place in its theories and practices and the strong political charge of its shape and content” (Giudice & Giubilaro, 2015: 81). Furthermore, studying cultural practices could help to unravel the border’s functioning mechanisms as it can open up new theoretical space “where borders show their constructed and contested nature, and are unveiled for what they are: cultural artefacts and political formations” (ibid.).

Simultaneously, a geopolitical perspective is crucial for the understanding and analysis of border art, writes Szary (in Giudice and Giubilaro, 2015: 80), who understands artworks as landscape interventions with a strong capacity for political influence. Szary calls for the emergence of a new of study she calls ‘art geopolitics’. A field located at the intersection of art related to place and landscape, and power related to politics. A field wherein cultural production is considered as more than a side
issue to border studies (DellÁgnese and Szary, 2015). Whilst exploring border art from the geopolitical point of view, the relationship of the artwork with the place it is located in should be explored, write Giudice and Giubilaro (2015:80). Moreover, in addition to the place, the way in which the border is embodies is an important aspect (ibid.).

One role that cultural production can have in relation to bordering processes is described by Giudice and Giubilaro (2015: 97), who write that artistic interventions have the potential to alternate and interrupt bordering logics. More than a decade before, also Berelowitz (1997: 72), in her discussion on the conflict over border art, emphasised the transformative power of artistic practices. She based this discussion on the case of the Border Art Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW/TAF) on the US-Mexican border. The BAW/TAF is known as one of the first art collectives that focused on the border in art practice.

What also derives from Berelowitz’ discussion however, is that border art is often accompanied by a ‘struggle over representation’ that can create conflicts over who is in possession of ‘the right to perform border art’ (Berelowitz 1997, 82). In the same line, Ingram (2011) suggests that instead of simply assuming the power of art, one should rather “attend to the multiple rhetorics and modalities of artistic interventions, to their practices, their reception and effects, in order to investigate how they may corroborate, suggest or energize other kinds of action” (2011: 222). While art can serve as “an index of and contributor to political and spatial transformation” (ibid.:218) it should be acknowledged that the power of art is not ‘magical’ and that art can also create new borders, even if the artist aims to challenge the existing ones.

To recapitulate, what derives from the existing literature is that it is of great importance to remain sceptical and alert towards the contribution of cultural production to the deconstruction of b/ordering dynamics. Whereas creative practice has the potential to shed light on or transform the logic of the border, it can at the same time, consciously or unconsciously, create new borders. What forms exactly these practices (can) have, and how they work to deconstruct or transform the borders in question, remains to be rarely addressed.
3 Methodology, methods and data

3.1 A qualitative holistic multi-methods approach

Considering the objectives of this project to innovatively contribute to expanding the understanding of b/ordering dynamics within societies, and more specifically cities as well as to the emerging field of art geopolitics, through a case study in urban space Berlin, it is of great importance that the approach holds methods that can provide a look beneath the surface of what is visible.

This look can only be obtained by taking a qualitative approach in which statistical facts and official documents are not left out of consideration but are at all times viewed upon sceptically. Executing this research qualitatively contributes to assembling valuable insights that capture meanings, experiences and stories of the urban space and its residents as it allows “a far richer (fuller, multi-faceted) or deeper understanding of a phenomenon than using numbers” (Braun and Clarke, 2013: 24). Furthermore, it allows “to retain focus on people’s own framing around issues, and their own terms of reference, rather than having it pre-framed by the researcher” (ibid.). The concept of the border is taken as the central unit and the starting point of this research project’s exploration. From there however, it is left open what issues and processes are regarded as b/ordering by the residents in the so-called ‘field’. What deserves a brief mentioning is that having an urban space as the ‘field’ defining the where of the research project means that throughout the fieldwork period, the researcher moves always within this field. Even at times the researcher did not go out to conduct a specific research method, all senses were kept open to stay attentive and taking in all possible information whilst moving anywhere in the field named ‘urban space Berlin’ (see Plate 3).

The ‘borderwork’ that this project aims to explore and deconstruct is difficult to grasp as it “proceeds through a fluid assemblage of functions, mechanisms, and actors; a series of loose institutional arrangements, recomposed […] ‘as necessary’” (Bialasiewicz, 2012: 844). It is thus interwoven in different levels of society rather than concretely and visibly present in one particular place. Given the difficulties to get a hold on this assemblage and the reality that “there is no single set of actors that can be identified as the bordering ‘state’” (ibid., pp. 845), a creative and innovative strategy to grasp the present b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin has to be found. Therefore, the research is carried out multi-methodically; various data gathering techniques are chosen that supplement each other through taking place on different levels and geographical places within the complex urban space.

3.3 Research methods

In order to grasp the ‘fluid assemblage’ and interconnectedness of the present b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin, multiple methods are arranged and executed that complement each other in the
process of shedding light on the to-be-explored from different levels and different places. This will contribute to the holistic view that this research project seeks to obtain. Important to note is that whereas these methods seem clear-cut separated on paper, they often overlap in ‘the field’.

Qualitative research was conducted in the period of April till July 2017 in Berlin, Germany. The data that is derived from the interviews, the participation in creative projects, and the ethnographic flânerie serves as the very foundation of this research project. The further observations, document analysis and informal conversations play an important secondary role in supporting these data and providing yet another angle to look from.

3.3.1 Expert interviews

Where the access to a particular field is somehow difficult, expert interviews appear to be a useful method (Bogner, Littig and Menz, 2009). In this case, the difficulty of access to the field was challenging because of Berlins large surface. The urban space Berlin covers an area of 891.7 square kilometres, holds a population of over 3.5 million and consists of twelve boroughs (in German: Bezirke), each with its own local government but subject to the Berlin Senate and 96 localities (in German: Stadtteile/Ortsteile) which are mostly further subdivided into serval other zones, often referred to as Kiez (see Plate 3).

As this research project seeks to take an holistic approach, respondents needed to be found who master, according to the sociology of knowledge of this method, an overview of the “overall known knowledge in one (specialist) field” (Pfadenhauer, 2009: 82). These experts do not need to be considered experts in the field itself. They can also be people that are in the possession of ‘special knowledge’ due to their role in the field (Gläser and Laudel, 2009), people that possess ‘expert knowledge’ according to the researcher (Meuser and Nagel, 2009).

A key informant, or expert, who was able “to some extent, to adopt the stance of the investigator” (Merriam and Tisdell, 2015: 129) gave the advice to speak to City Locality Coordinators who belong to the experts in their social space and know what is going on in the locality where they work in the Stadtteilzentrum (transl.: City Locality Centre, hereafter: STZ). The STZs are in close contact with both, the Quartiersmanagement (transl.: quarter management) programme (see paragraph 5.6.1) of the Senate Administration for Urban Development and Housing and the Borough Administration (in German: Bezirksverwaltung) on the ‘higher’ level and with the residents of the locality on the ‘lower’ level. Moreover, as written nicely on the city’s official website:

“City Locality Centres are committed to neighbourhood work and, with their intergenerational and integrative work, create the prerequisites for social participation and civic engagement

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6 The word ‘Kiez’ refers to a city neighborhood, a relatively small community within a locality of the city. It is mainly used in Berlin and northern Germany.
Plate 3  Map of administrative divisions of Berlin
Source: Wikimedia
of Berlin citizens. They are easily accessible and open to all age groups and nationalities\textsuperscript{7}.

STZs thus not only serve as an intermediate actor ‘between the levels’, but also seek to serve as Brückenbauer (transl.: bridge builders) between the various residents, organisations and facilities in their locality and its Kieze. Therefore, they operate on a level that is interesting and relevant to obtain information from and serves well to overcome the difficulties of gaining the right access to the field for this research project.

After speaking to one City Locality Coordinator to get a feeling for their position in the field, I decided to contact all 31 STZs and various NSZs of Berlin with the aim of speaking to at least two coordinators per borough to spread the source of information as much as possible between the diverse and large research field. In total eighteen qualitative interviews of around 1,5 hours have been conducted in seventeen different localities and eight of the ten boroughs, with in total 20 ‘experts’ which all gave me their written consent to refer to them in this thesis. In expert interviewing, the sample ‘N’ is interrelated differently to quantitative conceptions of representability and could

\textbf{Table 4  Overview of the experts and the size of their localities and boroughs}

\textit{Source: Statistics for Berliner Ortsteile}

\textsuperscript{7} Stadtteilzentren: https://www.berlin.de/sen/soziales/themen/buergerschaftliches-engagement/stadtteilzentren/ (transl. from German).
therefore be small or large (Littig, 2009). *Plate 4* provides an overview of the experts, their locality, and their boroughs.

For the interviews, a semi-structured interview technique was used in order to stimulate the ‘experts’ to speak freely, without too much interference of the researcher and without the need to answer according to fixed categories. These interviews are semi-structured by an interview guide (see Appendix I.) and allow the respondents to provide rich details about thoughts and attitudes, that he finds remarkable and thus important to share (Suter, 2013; Meuser & Nagel, 2009; Tansey, 2007). This interview guide consisted of an in advance composed number of topics and questions with themes to touch upon. From there, in line with what Boeije, Hart and Hox (2009) write, the researcher followed the respondent when talking about the topics, also if it led, to a certain extent, away from the original interview guide.

This proved as a clever way to conduct the interviews since the purpose was to open up the concept of the border for experiences and stories that derive from the urban space some of which I could then involve in later interviews. All interviews were carried out by the researcher and were thoroughly prepared. Every interview was performed in German, and for none of the interviews there was made use of a translator. Most interviews were recorded, but in some cases solely notes have been taken.

Through discussing different topics, the expert interviews serve to answer a part of all sub-questions. Firstly, and foremost, they provided information about the b/ordering dynamics subsequent functioning mechanisms that are present in the locality whereof the subsequent Locality Coordinator is an ‘expert’. Secondly, their experience of being a Berlin resident was used to assemble information about which contemporary b/ordering dynamics and subsequent functioning mechanisms they note Berlin-wide. Thirdly their opinion about what changes would make the dealing with borders easier was asked to not only end this thesis with recommendations ‘from the researcher’s perspective’ but complement those with recommendations from the ‘experts’ themselves. And fourthly, they were asked about their opinion concerning if and how art could contribute to the dealing with borders, with their practical experience of daily working with borders in their locality in mind. This provides yet another perspective to explore the ways in which creative practices can contribute to border deconstruction.

### 3.3.2 Interviewing creatives

In a similar, but slightly less formal manner, semi-structured interviews were conducted with various creatives: sound- and new media artist Georg Klein, multidisciplinary artist, curator and art & design theorist Lisa Glauer, performative artist duo Casper Pauli and Birgit Auf der Lauer, curator, cultural

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8 See website Georg Klein: http://www.georgklein.de/
9 See website Lisa Glauer: http://www.lisaglauer.com/
10 See website Casper Pauli and Birgit Auf der Lauer: http://www.varsityofmaneuvers.org/
manager and artistic director of Urbane Künste Ruhr\textsuperscript{11} and Zentrum für Kunst und öffentlichen Raum Schloss Biesdorf (Center for Art and Public Space)\textsuperscript{12}, designer Charlotte Danoy Kent of KUNSTASYL e.V.\textsuperscript{13}, activist Alice Romoli of Peng! Kollektiv\textsuperscript{14} and visual artist and performer Marta Lodola\textsuperscript{15} – all concerned with borders in some way.

Together with the participations in creative project and further observations, the data assembled through these interviews will form the fundament of the answer to the question of \textit{how} these creative practices can deconstruct and shed light on the in/visible b/ordering dynamics (sub-question IV.). As a sampling method for these interviews a so-called ‘snowball’ technique (Boeije, 2014) was used to find more ‘creatives’.

Also for these interviews, an interview guide (see Appendix II.) was made to roughly structure the conversation. However, the ‘creatives’ were free to lead its course and speak about anything that the associated in relation to the borders-concept in the most broad sense. In this way, the interviews were flexible and explorative yet partly pre-determined in character so the researcher still had something to hold on to (Braun et al., 2013). This open interview strategy allowed the ‘creatives’ to bring up issues that I as a researcher with an academic perspective did not think of beforehand, something which did not rarely happen during these conversations and I experiences as very refreshing and valuable.

3.3.3 Participating in creative practices

Thirdly, and mainly in order to answer sub-question IV., a participatory method is utilised to enhance the iterative and explorative process. This method is to be placed within the ethnographic tradition that finds its origins in the discipline of anthropology. It is defined on the basis of the necessity to “understand ‘things’ from [the peoples] perspective” (Baker, 2006: 171) by studying them also within their natural settings.

Through participating in multiple creative practices, more concretely being part of several projects, that are in some way concerned with borders, this research project takes not only place \textit{outside} of the creative space where one can solely speak \textit{about} creative practices. It is taken \textit{into} the actual space where these practices are taking place and thereby allowed the researcher to participate, experience and creatively create herself. Hence, the data assembled through this method will serve as an important complementation to the data assembled through the interviews.

Projects that were participated in are the share-house project ‘Refugio Berlin’\textsuperscript{16}, the creating of

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{11} See website Urbane Künste Ruhr: http://www.urbanekuensteruhr.de/en/frontpage
  \item \textsuperscript{12} See website Zentrum für Kunst und öffentlichen Raum Schloss Biesdorf: http://zkr-berlin.de/en/home-2/
  \item \textsuperscript{13} See website KUNSTASYL e.V.: http://kunstasyl.net/en/
  \item \textsuperscript{14} See website Peng! Kollektiv: https://pen.gg/
  \item \textsuperscript{15} See website Marta Lodola: https://martalodola.wordpress.com/
  \item \textsuperscript{16} See website Refugio Berlin: http://www.refugio.berlin/
\end{itemize}
art-installation ‘Passage’\textsuperscript{17} as part of the production ‘THE KINGS’\textsuperscript{18} of art-project ‘KUNSTASYL e.V.’\textsuperscript{19}, the encounter-café ‘Meet ‘n Eat’\textsuperscript{20}, the film-project ‘Wir sind Marzahn’\textsuperscript{21} of the MSD Marzahn-Hellersdorf\textsuperscript{22}, the ‘Organ of Critical Arts’\textsuperscript{23} and the collaboration with aforementioned visual and performance artist Marta Lodola in her project ‘Actions against borders #1 Breaking point’\textsuperscript{24} about the meaning of borders as physical and psychological limits for people. Together we conducted walks through the urban space, during which we stopped people to collect their impressions, experiences and thoughts about borders with an audio-recorder. Marta herself will continue with these walks in various boroughs of Berlin as well as in Athens and subsequently use the audio recordings for an indoor exhibition and performance at the Organ of Critical Arts.

3.3.4 Ethnographic flânerie

One crucial way to identify and understand borders that run through an urban space is to actually be there and move around in it – to let the urban space speak itself. The practice of attentively walking in a space while using all senses to experience and observe it, offers yet another important perspective than solely reading and talking about it. In the field of geography, this method is often called ‘modern flânerie’ and can be placed in the context of a recent and growing interest in ‘practices of walking’ within the field of social and cultural geography (Garret, 2014; Kramer and Short, 2011; Kramsch, 2017; Kusenbach, 2003; Pender, 2011; Pink et al, 2010).

The method refers to the figure of the flângeur, which has been subject of a large number of appropriations and interpretations since Walter Benjamin, drawing on poetry of Charles Baudelaire, made it and object of scholarly interest in the twentieth century, describing the flângeur as the essential modern urban spectator and amateur detective and investigator of the city (Benjamin, 2006).

According to Kramer and Short (2011) ethnographic flânerie can help to produce vibrant documents of cities. Central to it, is the attentive observation of the emotional, atmospheric, and embodied dimensions of spaces, write Lee and Ingold (2006). According to Kusenbach (2003) the movement implied in this method helps to overcome possible shortcomings of the more classical ethnographic methods and holds the potential to “assess some of the transcendent and reflexive aspects of lived experience in situ [and] brings greater phenomenological sensibility” (ibid.: 1).

In this research project, ethnographic flânerie was conducted thoroughly alongside the other methods, in various places of the city, its boroughs, its localities and its Kieze. It took place in two

\textsuperscript{17} See PASSAGE on website KUNSTASYL: http://kunstasyl.net/en/bewohner/passage/
\textsuperscript{18} See THE KINGS on website KUNSTASYL: http://kunstasyl.net/en/2-og/201/
\textsuperscript{19} See website KUNSTASYL: http://kunstasyl.net/en/
\textsuperscript{20} See website Meet ‘n Eat: https://www.meet-n-eat-berlin.de/
\textsuperscript{21} See website Wir sind Marzahn: http://www.wirsindmarzahn.de/
\textsuperscript{22} See website Volkssolidarität: https://www.volksolidaritaet.de/berlin/beratung-hilfe/migration/
\textsuperscript{23} See website Organ of Critical Arts: http://www.kritische-kunst.org/en
\textsuperscript{24} See Actions against Borders on website Marta Lodola: https://martalodola.wordpress.com/actions-against-borders/
different ways. Firstly, to make sense of ‘the where and the how’ of Berlins past (borders), I walked the urban section of the Berliner Mauerweg (or: Berlin Wall Trail) which silently runs through the city. This trail

“[...] traces the course of the former GDR border fortification encircling former West Berlin along a total of 160 kilometres. In most sections, it runs along the former patrol road used by customs officers in West Berlin or along the border control road used by GDR border troops for their own patrols” (Chronik der Mauer).

Its course is marked by rather unobtrusive signs and a likewise unobtrusive double tiled line marking the exact location of the wall on the ground. Secondly, to explore the what, where and how of the current in/visible contemporary b/ordering dynamics in the urban space Berlin further ethnographic flâneries are conducted in as much as possible different localities, mostly combined with the location of the expert interviews.

The ‘modern flâneries’ are documented not only in field notes, but also with the use of photographs. These function as a method of assembling and analysing data (Pink, 2013a) and moreover contribute to the expression of present borders in the urban space in a way that words not always can (Pink, 2013b).

3.3.5 Attending conferences, workshops, city walks, museums and centres

During the search of b/ordering dynamics and creative practices, but most probably after finding a part of them, the method of ethnographic observations (Spradley, 1980) whilst attending conferences, workshops, discussions and alternative city walks, visiting museums, open air exhibitions and centres and walking though the city’s streets, will, in addition to the other methods, help to gain further insights in the various kinds of b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms and into the various possible creative practices and the related how-question (sub-question IV.).

This observing and interacting with people at the same time (Spradley, 1980) will help to get in touch with the few centres that are concerned with the crossroads of urban space, public space and (politically engaged) art, rather than solely reading about them through their websites and thereby getting to know the urban space more in depth.

Visited centres were the Zentrum für Kunst und Urbanistik (transl.: Centre for Art and Urbanistics)25, the exhibition ‘Between Spaces’ in the Zentrum für Kunst und öffentlichen Raum Schloss Biesdorf (Centre for Art and Public Space)26 and the Organ kritischer Kunst (transl.: Organ of Critical Arts)27. Visited museums where the Jugend[widerstands]museum (trans.: Youth resistance

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25 See website ZK/U: http://www.zku-berlin.org/
27 See OKK website: http://www.kritische-kunst.org/en
museum)\(^{28}\), the FHXB Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum\(^{29}\) and the exhibition DaHEIM from KUNSTASYL e.V.\(^{30}\) in the Museum Europäischer Kulturen (transl.: Museum of European Cultures). The attended conferences were ‘Destination Berlin: Strategies of Arrival Architecture’\(^{31}\) and ‘Tagung: Stadt, Migration, Bildung’ (transl.: City, migration, education)\(^{32}\). The city walks that were attended are organised by ‘Querstadtein’\(^{33}\) and ‘Grenzgänger’\(^{34}\). The attended workshop took place far out in the former eastern part of Berlin was named ‘Entdeckungsreise rund um die Kulturen von Marzahn-Hellersdorf’ (transl.: Expedition amongst the cultures of Marzahn-Hellersdorf)\(^{35}\).

### 3.3.6 Informal conversations

The importance of continuous informal conversations, in anthropology also called the method of *small talk*, is described by among others Driessen and Jansen (2013). In order to find both, hidden b/ordering dynamics as well as artists, art projects and other creative practices, the method of small talking and thereby networking, in addition to other research methods is a central ingredient. Moreover, informal conversations with multiple different Berlin residents help to learn a great deal about their experiences and affairs from every-day-life in the urban space – information assembled in these conversations provide the researcher with insights in the so-called ‘local’ way (Driessen and Jansen, 2013).

### 3.3.7 Analysing official documents, websites and information plates

Once having an idea of *what* the contemporary borders in urban borderscape Berlin are, this method will be useful to deconstruct their imaginative apparatus; the meanings and intent hidden inside them (Paasi, 2011: 13). As stated by Paasi, this apparatus consists of a certain degree of symbolisation accompanied by narrations and images, which stretches into different media and strategies like literary landscape, iconography, film, information, and mindscapes (ibid.). Analysing and reading the representations, frames, discourses and imagery used in official documents, political speeches, media texts and imagery, documentaries/films and books will help to look beyond the surface of the border and unravel its apparatus.

### 3.5 Analysis

As aforementioned, most of the twenty-six interviews with experts and creatives were recorded. This

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\(^{28}\) See website Jugend[widerstands]museum: http://widerstandsmuseum.de/

\(^{29}\) See website FHXB Museum: http://www.fhxb-museum.de/


\(^{31}\) See website Berlinische Galerie: https://www.berlinischegalerie.de/en/home/destination-berlin/

\(^{32}\) See website Grenzgänger: http://grenzgaenger-berlin.de/tagung-stadtbild

\(^{33}\) See website Querstadtein: http://querstadtein.org/en/

\(^{34}\) See website Grenzgänger: http://grenzgaenger-berlin.de/

\(^{35}\) See website Bezirksamt Marzahn-Hellersdorf: https://www.berlin.de/ba-marzahn-hellersdorf/aktuelles/pressemitteilungen/2017/pressemitteilung.589562.php
made a full transcription possible. Thereafter the transcripts were provided with codes. These codes helped to group the assembled data in categories, in order to gather data on particular topics (e.g.: a particular b/ordering dynamic, working mechanism or a way in which a creative practice contributes to deconstruct or illuminate a b/ordering dynamic or mechanism) which were analysed on the bases of Spradley’s (1980) method of analysis, which provided a good overview of all data.

These categories that derived from the data assembled in field, were taken as a starting point for analysis and provided a structure for the methodological chapters (4, 5 and 6). Moreover, the transcripts allowed a direct and full access to quotations. These had to be then translated, as nearly all interviews were held in German. In translating these, it was attempted to maintain the original and literal meaning as well as possible. It should however, be taken into account that the quotations in the following three empirical chapters remain the interpretations of the researcher.

3.6 Reflections on the position in the field and limitations

My position as human geographical researcher in Berlin was an interesting one. I had the advantage of coming ‘from the outside’ looking with a ‘fresh pair of eyes’ into the complex urban space Berlin. This enabled me to notice those kinds of things that often fade or become naturalised in the routines of daily lives. In addition, I had the large advantage of not being restricted by the border of language, which can be ‘a really though one’. I was thus able to read all texts, signs, posters, commercials, street names, explanation plates and news messages without a problem, and most importantly, I could communicate with Berlin residents and my interviewees in their own language.

At the same time, the fact that I came ‘from the outside’ in to this complex ‘field’ affected my ability to grasp this highly complex urban space with its contemporary b/ordering dynamics and their functioning mechanisms as simultaneously I had to get used to the new environment and the practical actions such as navigating myself around this large city. After one or two weeks however, I started to get a grip on the field and what I was doing in it. The time of the fieldwork period restricted me to expand the number of interviews or to choose actors from yet another level to speak to which would have given me even more perspectives to explore. Lastly, it has to be noted that choosing a holistic approach to study such an extensive urban space made this research project very valuable and relevant as there is a lack of such studies (Bernt et al., 2013: 13), but simultaneously this decision was quite a bit too ambitious for a research project with this scope and timeframe.

Furthermore, it must be noted that although the locality centre coordinators are indeed the ‘experts’ of their social space, they do think and answer questions from their perspective and their role in the field. The data assembled from the interviews that were conducted with them should thus not be regarded as ‘the unconditional truth’ but always be looked upon sceptically, reflectively.
4 | Contemporary in/visible b/ordering dynamics

This chapter discusses the various visible and invisible bordering and ordering dynamics that are currently present on the stage of urban space Berlin (sub-question I.). The information for this chapter is mainly assembled through the conducted expert interviews and the ethnographic flâneries throughout the city. But also, data from the other methods were used to complement this information, in order to enrich the integrity of the discussion and enable it to explore the in/visible b/ordering dynamics from multiple perspectives (Rumford, 2012). The word is given mainly to the City Locality Coordinators, who are the ‘experts’ in their social space (see paragraph 3.3.1), as well as to the urban space itself, figuring as a storyteller (see paragraph 3.3.4). The following discussion will thus be of a rather descriptive nature and seeks to let the rich data that were assembled from the field be in dialogue with each other in order to offer a comprehensive and holistic sense of what in/visible b/ordering dynamics are present in Berlin today and how these may or may not relate to each other.

4.1 East and west

“When you are on a hunt for borders that presently run through an urban space, it makes sense to first delve yourself into this space’s history. In Berlin, this history is a very particular one, especially when it comes to the topic of borders. A history that clearly occupies a key position in any analysis of borders and urban space in Berlin. A history of a complete division between two parts of the city for more than twenty years of the past century. A history of a material, evidently visible ‘Berliner Mauer’ that characterised the cityscape. A history full of stories about goodbyes, succeeded and failed attempts to escape and ruthless killings in the border area. A history of a period of which the end was tremendously celebrated twenty-eight years ago” (excerpt from the blog, 27 May 201736).

The first b/ordering dynamic that can be contemporarily found, visible as well as invisible, on the stage of the urban space Berlin is the border between the eastern and the western boroughs of the city as a result from its divided past.

4.1.1 Memory culture

In the most visible form, this b/ordering dynamic between east and west continues to have a clear physical presence in the city’s urban space. After a period of clear reticence in terms of preserving the past that marked the years after the fall of the Wall started to decrease, the experience of the long-term division has become central to the practices of an emerging ‘memory culture’ in Berlin (Ward, 2016).

36 For this and all following excerpts from the blog; the following website of the blog ‘Present borders in Border-Memoryland Berlin’: https://presentbordersinbordermemorylandberlin.wordpress.com/ written by Katinka Schlette during the period of fieldwork in Berlin.
A large variety of memorials, mainly positioned in the former borderland, serves to celebrate the fall of the wall, to convey respect to the victims of its consequences, to tell stories of the past, to figure as a kind of anti-example that warns us to never act this way again and to continually value the fact the material border wall does no longer runs through the city. At these museums, exhibitions and memorials, the former border area is daily visited by many people. Some of them come to commemorate events that took place in history. Some of them come out of curiosity, eager to learn about history. Some of them come to take a photo, either with possibly few other visitors featuring in it or with themselves posing in front or on top of it, looking at their best. An example is the panorama exhibition ‘The Wall’ by artist Yadegar Asisi that I paid a visit during one of my first ethnographic flâneries along the Berlin Wall Trail. “[H]e brings the divided city to life”, is what the flyer said:

“The writers of this flyer claim to offer a ‘change of perspective’ by displacing the visitor back in time into the daily life of a West Berlin quarter next to the Berlin Wall on a fictitious autumn day in the 1980s. Although I felt that this exhibition was relevant in the sense that it, different from other exhibitions, sought to depict Berlins past by making it not only visual but also sensible – I must admit that indeed, whilst standing on the platform in the specially built rotunda, watching and listening around me, I could grasp a tiny glimpse of what life there must have been like – it still felt strange to take part in a little piece of Berlins extensive and mainly privatized memory culture” (field notes, 18 May).
This excerpt from my field notes illustrates the strange collision of the importance of remembering the past and the way in which history tends to be turned into a commodity product that can be consumed. The memory culture in Berlin has the tendency to commodify the city’s history and to encourage so-called ‘wall tourism’. So, it is possible, for example, to pay to get your passport stamped in a little tourist shop painted to look like an old border checkpoint positioned half way down the famous East Side Gallery (see Plate 5). Likewise popular is the posing with actors dressed as American and Soviet soldiers outside a replica of the control hut that stood at the famous Checkpoint Charlie and visit the privately initiated Museum of the Haus am Checkpoint Charlie for no less than twelve euros and fifty cents. Also the numerous ‘Imbiss’ stands named after well-known places or persons of the bordered history and the hawkers selling ‘historical’ souvenirs that are most likely produced in a post-communist factory in Asia, cannot be left unmentioned.

It is, of course, important to remember this divided past and to share its stories and experiences with people from over the world. But it remains questionable if the sharing of stories and experiences is still the main motive when fees are increasing and the visitors are more concerned with the making of photographs than receiving the actual information (a spiral perhaps?).

Moreover, I could not let go of the strange feeling I got from the way in which the information plates in the Asissi exhibition, similar as on the beBerlin billboards, the completely opposed the past and the wall-free present in which we ‘no longer think about freedom’ because we are living in a society ‘in which there are no borders’. The aim, the description went on, is to serve as a warning sign to prevent ‘walls’ from happening again and not take our freedom for granted. As much as I agree with that, what was left unexplained is that there actually still are borders in our society – but these borders are not of the same nature as the ‘classical’ wall. The panorama should have served to warn against these borders too (I left them this message in the guestbook at the exit).

However, not all monuments concerning the city’s historic divide have turned into commercialised privately-owned spaces. What illustrates this best, is the ‘Mauer Gedenkstätte’ (see Plate 6), located in the centre of the city along Bernauerstraße, a street that was split in two halves be the former wall. Here, structures of the former border security installations, meant to keep people from fleeing the GDR, have been partly retained. It is hence the place where the former border is still visible in the most realistic way:

“As the tourist rush hours had passed, there were not many other people. It was rather calm, except for some cars and trams driving through the Bernauerstraße every few minutes. Bernauerstraße is a street with a very peculiar history. With the division of the city and the construction of the Wall, neighbours from across the street could no longer visit each other because the East-West border happened to run precisely on one side of the street. The subsequent ‘cleaning’ of the death strip area meant that all houses located within that zone were taken down by the GDR. Today, this wide strip of land is not build over but transformed
into a park. Between this park and the Bernauerstraße the former Wall is marked, very clearly this time. Instead of the two-tiled demarcation on the ground iron rods arise from where the wall had been up until 28 years ago, cautionary alternated with pieces of the actual remaining Wall. As I entered the park, I heard birds’ carefree (or careless) singing as the sun would set soon – a strange mixture of atmospheres” (ethnographic flânerie, 24 April).

In the park itself several information plates with texts, photographs, audio fragments and video fragments have been installed explaining about the formal wall and the death strip.

4.1.2 Physical traces

Apart from the memory culture, secondly, there are other physical traces that still give away the city’s past divide. The most concrete one being the course of the former border strip that ran through the city from the north to the south (see Plate 7). Along this course a relatively unobtrusive ‘memorial’ has been constructed from 2002 till 2006, namely; the Berliner Mauerweg, or in English; the Berlin Wall Trail (see sub-paragraph 3.3.4). The course is marked by a two-tiled line, running on over streets, side-
walks, parks, sometimes disappearing under buildings – or cars parked over it – and then reappearing again (see Plate 1 and 9), as well as by signposts set out to guide the few people that walk the trail. The former no man’s land of border fortifications that defines the course of this trail has become a palimpsest for multiple meanings and uses, as Glolden (2013) describes, something that I discovered myself at first hand, as this trail became one of the places where the ethnographic flâneries of this research project were conducted. The following excerpt from the post named ‘Flâneuring Past and Present Divides in Berlin’s Cityscape’ on the blog illustrates this quite well:

“While flâneuring along the Mauerweg, sections with traces and memorials of the old Wall – those that are often crowded and surrounded by a large number of hawkers, Imbiss stands and souvenir shops where most visitors gather – alternate with sections where the former divide remains barely visible and the crowds of visitors seem to have suddenly disappeared. Following the trail through the centre of the city makes me discover many stories and remnants of the past. Stopping now and then to realise how certain places have looked during the period of the Wall and how they have changed, brought a tiny part of history back to life”.

During the ethnographic flâneries along the former course of the wall, this ‘tiny part’ of the divided history becomes visible through various things.

First, apart from the aforementioned ‘hyper-visible’ spots where a piece of the wall itself remains and tourists often choose to gather, and the demarcated Berlin Wall Trail, physical traces of the past division are visible through architecture. Often, relatively new buildings fill the area where the border fortifications were once positioned. A clear example that helps to illustrate this is Potsdam Square (see Plate 8 and 9):

“For the 28 years during which the Wall cut through Berlin, Potsdam Square was more or less wasteland. On the eastern side, all buildings were gradually torn down to make the death strip broader […] In the 70s and 80s, viewing platforms for looking towards the East made this square, formerly the busiest in Berlin, a tourist attraction. After the fall of the Wall, ‘new densely-populated quarters rose phoenix-like from the ashes of the old border wasteland’, as one of the Berlin Wall Trail’s information plate says” (ethnographic flânerie, 22 April).

Also in terms of architecture styles in the city, the past division is noticeable, as CLC Katharina Kühnel (23 May) tells me: “I still notice the East-West frontier architecturally when I go through the city”. Also CLC Maike Janssen says: “I think one still feels this old division. How the eastern part partly looks like. I do not mean the inner city boroughs, these are relatively similar. But if you move further to the city’s margins, you will see the ‘Plattenbauten’ as they were in the former east”.

37 Plattenbauten is plural for Plattenbau: a building constructed according to a refabricated construction method, using large, prefabricated concrete slabs. Whilst considered to be typical of East Germany, it was also used for social housing in West Germany.
Second, physical traces that remain are the long-stretched parks or walking paths (see Plate 11) as well as the few remaining empty plots of land and haunted houses in the former border area, which will probably soon be bought by an investor to transform into yet another construction site.

Lastly, also the Spree river was mentioned as an ever remaining border that reminds of the past: “It is a geographical story of “what is on the one side and what is here”, expresses CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May) during the interview.
Plate 11  A Cold War map with the Berlin Wall as bricked barrier and barbed wire surrounding West Berlin, 1963
Source: Pinterest
4.1.3 Invisible remnants

“In the minds, this frontier is still in place […]

In many places the border is no longer seen, it is very fluid”

(Neriman Kurt, 18 May).

Third, there are various less physically visible ‘ghosts’ of the past east-west divide that haunt and have haunted urban space Berlin and its residents up until today. These ‘ghosts’ were mentioned by nearly all City Locality Coordinators when they were asked about what borders presently run through the city. What came forward is that it are these invisible b/ordering dynamics, rather than the previously discussed physical traces, continue to play a role in the daily lives of some Berlin residents. In this sub-paragraph the various mentioned ways in which the east-west border is invisibly present in Berlin are discussed.

A first invisible difference between the east and the west of the city is a difference in terms of atmosphere on the streets, seemingly coinciding with a difference of the population composition. This difference was also noted whilst conducting the ethnographic flâneries. The former western boroughs of the city are often still shaped by the presence of what was formerly known as ‘guest workers’, explains CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) during the interview. This resulted in a large number of residents with a Turkish background, but also people from Poland, people from Arabic background, people from Bosnia and many other countries, she tells. Former western boroughs are therefore very ‘mixed’, says also CLC Kathatina Kühnel (23 May).

About Lichtenberg, located in the former eastern part of the city, CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May) tells me that there are some people with migration background but not as many. They mainly come from Vietnam and Russia, explains also informant Cordula Bienstein about former eastern borough Marzahn-Hellersdorf (field notes, 5 May). “This has a great impact” Hermann says: “Such an atmosphere as in Neukölln is not present here at all. You can see a few kebab stores, but the people here are the native inhabitants, I would say”. CLC Ira Freigang (1 June), who works in former eastern locality Pankow, finds this difference very interesting because, different from the image of Kreuzberg where a large part of the population consists of people with a Turkish background, the residents with a polish background who form the biggest part of the residents with a migration background in her locality, are not as visibly present in the public space. Also the fact that many of the apartments in Lichtenberg Mitte were assigned to the middle layer of the GDR society still draws the atmosphere of the borough, Hermann explains further. In the same line Tomas Potyka (30 May) tells me the following about Hohenschönhausen-Süd, another locality in Lichtenberg: “There were many former Stasi people living here. And there are still a few of them. They shape a certain part of the mentality. We notice this in our work because we have many older people volunteering”.

Furthermore, a contemporary difference is mentioned concerning the socialisation of the
residents of the eastern and western parts of the city, or as informant Janna Völpel (field notes, 5 May) puts it; a difference in ‘lifestyles’. “You cannot only notice it through the buildings, but also through the differences in socialisation”, says CLC Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June). And CLC Maike Janssen (13 June) who works in locality Gesundbrunnen, close to where the border ran says:

“So when you walk to the other side of the S-Bahn bridges, you can see that there are other people walking around. It feels different there and they are dressed differently.”

Likewise, Neriman Kurt (18 May) explains that albeit no longer visible in many places, the border is still present in terms of cultural differences. An illustrative example for this, is a so-called ‘intercultural workshop’ named ‘Entdeckungsreise rund um die Kulturen von Marzahn-Hellersdorf’ (transl.: ‘Discovery around the cultures of Marzahn-Hellersdorf’) that I attended during the fieldwork, far out in the former eastern part of Berlin. Whereas this workshop did not provide new knowledge content-wise, it made me realise that the discussed information about ‘how people from other cultures behave differently’ was rather new to the foremost elderly people of the ‘Kieztreff Marzahn-Nord’, who were the other attendants. Curator Katja Aßmann (10 June) noted also remaining differences in how residents of the eastern and western parts of Berlin have different understandings of art: “In the east, art was a product that could be bought by anyone – it was not very expensive, whereas in the west it had become some sort of status symbol” (Katja Aßmann, 10 June).

Third, there are clear differences between east and west when it comes to economic situation and political preferences. “There are differences in life standards,” tells me CLC Lars Schmitz (18 May) and many other City Locality Coordinators. Those that work in Locality Centres in the former eastern part of the urban space, often mention the struggle of child poverty and also elderly poverty, especially in the far out localities in the city’s margins. Similar struggles are however also mentioned by ‘experts’ working in outer locality in the former western part. Generally, it is in the former eastern boroughs where both the far-right party ‘Alternative für Deutschland’ and the far-left party ‘die Linke’ gain the most votes. This rather odd combination of left and right voters, can be explained through history: In the former east many “residents vote left-wing parties, in fact because of the old tradition” explains Sabrina Hermann (22 May). At the same time it is in the former east where a part of the population feels threatened by the current arrival of people from various different backgrounds, which explains the right votes. In Marzahn, the AfD is the second strongest party, just behind the Linke, tells me CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June). The very active right-voters often come from Brandenburg, the federal state surrounding Berlin, tells CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May) me. They often go into Berlin’s outer eastern boroughs to demonstrate.

What this paragraph showed is that one of the b/ordering dynamics that are contemporarily present in urban space Berlin, is the dynamic between the former east and the former west of the city. This first b/ordering dynamic is present in a visible way, through the extensive memory culture in the city and through the various physical traces that remain from the divided past. But also in multiple
invisible ways is this east-west b/ordering dynamic present in today’s Berlin. These invisible remnants of the past east-west divide are those that are most relevant to the daily lives of the Berlin residents themselves, whereas the physical traces, and especially the museums, memorials that make up the memory culture, quite ironically, gain the most attention.

4.2 Centre and periphery

“My walks [...] [show] that apart from being arranged along the enduring dynamics of the former east-west border, some present divides [...] take place along an interplay between the city’s centre and its periphery – a divide that is also marked physically by the Ringbahn encircling the city centre” (excerpt from the blog, 27 May 2017).

The second visible and invisible b/ordering dynamic that is present today in urban space Berlin is that between the city’s central boroughs and the city’s outer, peripheral boroughs. As also illustrated by the above quote, this divide is often described on the basis of ‘the ring’, thereby referring to the S-Bahn ring that encircles the centre and consists of a wide strip of train rails. The following words of CLC Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June) describe quite clear the general opinion concerning the b/ordering dynamic between centre and periphery:

“Urban people want to live all within the ring. They find it more chic. In the periphery it is rather so that you live there because you originally come from there or always have lived there, or because you have to move there. Although, at the moment it stretches little by little” (Elke Schönrock-Astilla, 9 June).

Similarly, the centre-periphery dynamic is often described with a distinction between the so-called hip ‘scene-boroughs’ and the ‘other’ districts further outwards. According to Seemann (15 June) the differences between those two are ‘enormous’: “They are almost other worlds”.

In this paragraph the focus will be on the various ways in which the b/ordering dynamic between centre and periphery manifests itself in urban space Berlin. It will do so by showing what takes place in the localities of both, the central and the peripheral boroughs, and by showing that there derived also such thing as the localities ‘in between’.

4.2.1 The beloved centre

“Hier im S-Bahn Innenring geht richtig die Post ab”
(Anette Maurer-Kartal, 20 June).

When ‘die Post richtig abgeht’ in a place, it means as much as “there is really something strong going on”. This is precisely how the current developments Berlin’s city centre, which to a large extend shape the b/ordering dynamic between centre and periphery, can be described.

In general, the centre of urban space Berlin is: “very mixed and constantly changing”
describes CLC Katharina Kühnel (23 May) who works in Neukölln. Since many years, people from all over the world come and go, tells CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) and she describes her locality Kreuzberg as follows:

“It was always a very diverse place for people who were politically active, for people who searched for alternative ways of living, for people with migration stories who came as ‘guest workers’ during the sixties and for many students that did not want to go to the army [...] The locality is one, that always again takes in people from the margins of society – whether they are drug addicts, homeless people or refugees. At the Kotbusser Tor one can see this whole mixture in one small spot”.

But over the past years “[t]he structure has changed”, says Kühnel (23 May). The amount of people that want to visit, see or live in the ‘beloved centre’ has risen sharply. Furthermore, this ‘change of structure’ entails the opening of many more ‘hip’ restaurants, bars, and cafes where these people go to. A visitor of the Locality Centre that now moved away, often complained to her about the fact that “there are only strangers around”. There are a lot of holiday apartments and conflicts around issues such as noise and garbage, Kühnel goes on to explain the changes. “A lot of residents say a certain lawlessness prevails”. But on the other hand, there are also people who like this increased international sphere.

Furthermore, all City Locality Coordinators of central localities mention the increased fullness and subsequently the increased pressure this takes along. “Everything that is located inside the ring is becoming more difficult to pay. “There is no living space left” says Kühnel (23 May). This results in situations of many people residing together in one small apartment as it is difficult to find an affordable other one. “Now many houses are restored and sold or rented very expensively” CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) says in the same line. It often happens out of greed for profits, that “long-established residents are left in ailing conditions until they ‘voluntarily’ move out” and do not earn enough to come back after the restauration (Katharina Kühnel, 23 May).

This process, called ‘Verdrängung’ (transl.: ‘displacement’) in German, is a large problem in the central localities of Berlin.

“Displacement is in my opinion a big issue. And also the question; who is buying property here and who is still living here? In some areas, there will be no one living anymore, as they will only consist of holiday apartments” (Elke Schönrock-Astilla, 9 June).

It also takes place in the central boroughs Friedrichshain and Prenzlauer Berg, located in the former eastern part of the city, that are today the home of rather prosperous residents and besides serve for a large part as the stage for an increasing number of ‘hip’ restaurants, bars and clubs. The majority of large families with children and relatively poor people have been displaced towards less central localities of their districts or social housing areas. “The current influx consists of people around their
thirties that want to start their family here. People who have a good job and are more prosperous” explains CLC Susanne Besch (2 May). These people do not identify with the Kiez so much because they move all over the city, which results in a situation wherein people, although living close together, do not really have something to do with one another (Besch, 2 May).

The localities Gesundbrunnen and Wedding on the very edge of Berlin’s city centre, are also described as very young and diverse in terms of cultural background of the residents. Originally being worker quarters located in the outskirts of the former West Berlin, their average population today is still not very wealthy; many residents are unemployed (Maïke Janssen, 13 June; Claudia Schwarz, 15 June). Also here however, since a few years, changes are notable as families that can no longer afford housing in the adjacent central areas arrive; “the theme ‘gentrification has arrived also here”, although one never thought that would happen, explains CLC Maïke Janssen (13 June). But there are still enough connections between the various residents of the locality, describes Claudia Schwarz, CLC in Wedding: “Most of them identify a lot with the Kiez and also the residents that have recently moved here are mostly well received”. Correspondingly, Janssen says that the residents are not so scared of ‘the new ones’ but rather of increasing rents and displacement as higher mechanisms. Here she elaborates:

“For a long time, Wedding and Gesundbrunnen were characterised by their still payable housing. If this changes now, or the danger exists that change will be soon to occur, this causes anxieties from the people who do not have so many possibilities to look for a place elsewhere and face the question of: ‘will I move now to the still affordable edge of the city?’” (Maïke Janssen, 13 June).

Even north of Wedding and Gesundbrunnen in the locality Reinickendorf of the borough Reinickendorf just outside of the centre, it is more and more noticeable that people move away because living space is not very cheap (Seemann, 15 June).

Also in central locality Schöneberg, located on the opposite edge of the city centre, a similar story takes place. Here, the ‘change’ might even be a little further already, as CLC Annette Maurer-Kartal explains that they have strongly to do with gentrification (20 June). Similar to what Schwarz told me about Wedding Mitte, the residents have a strong connection to and networks in their locality, “it is their home”. But also here pressure and anxiety fall like a shadow over the lives of Schöneberg’s long-established residents, amongst them people of various cultural backgrounds. “The locality has become chic. Whoever moves here has money”, says Maurer-Kartal. Where small shops are disappearing, latte macchiato cafes appear. Contrary to Wedding, here the various groups of residents have not much do with each other in everyday life and “the coexistence of living and working dissolves”, she explains. The newly moved ‘successful German parents’ often send their children to school elsewhere but at the same time they enjoy ‘strolling’ over the ‘authentic multicultural’ market. Anette Maurer-Kartal calls it a ‘segregation’, something that people do not want to acknowledge,
according to her.

In short, the ‘beloved centre’ is become more full – every street corner that offers more space in some way, will soon be filled – and more expensive. This change holds negative consequences for the less prosperous long-established residents as well as far the contact between people (see paragraph 4.3).

“The inner city core [...] or even the area around it, is affected. People are trying to find opportunities for evasion within the city, and these areas are becoming ever narrower. There is a socio-economic border for the people who cannot afford the connection anymore”.

These developments in the centre result in an outwards movement towards the other side of ‘the ring’: the periphery.

4.2.2 Periphery

“Outside of the ring, the problems then increase”
(Katharina Kühnel, 23 May).

This statement of CLC Kühnel illustrates the effect that the previously discussed inner city change has on the periphery; the other side of the b/ordering dynamic. What comes forward from the interviews with the City Locality Coordinators of the peripheral localities I visited, is that overall, the periphery is home to the less prosperous population of the city. Many of them mention child- or elderly poverty and a high unemployment rate as struggles that are present in their locality.

Furthermore, the periphery is often described as badly connected to the centre in terms of public transportation (Janna Völpel, 5 May; Lars Schmitz, 18 May). The following example shared by CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June) from Marzahn illustrates this:

“I regularly meet with friends in Kreuzberg who find Marzahn very far away. They think of Marzahn as grey and empty and of Kreuzberg as diverse and lively. They would never go all the way to here. It is like an invisible border”.

The mobility of the residents living in the outer boroughs of the city is often not very high, explains CLC Petra Sperling (14 June). People are seldom moving outside their environment to the centre or elsewhere in the city. Their neighbourhood, has sometimes become like a ‘little world’ on its own. This is mainly the case where social housing blocks form the largest part of the locality, as for example in Tegel Süd (Reinickendorf), Heerstraße Nord (Spandau) and Gropiusstadt (Neukölln). There, maps of the subsequent quarter, put up by the social housing company, provide an overview of all essentials needed in the daily lives of the little world’s residents, by showing the nearest supermarket, hairdressers, day care, family doctor and school.

A further part of the b/ordering dynamic revolves around perceptions of the peripheral areas.
According to CLC Petra Sperling (14 June), the perception from the quarter Heerstraße Nord in the locality Staaken of the borough Spandau where she works, corresponds to those of other peripheral localities. “We are always stigmatized on the basis of relatively bad statistics concerning income, cultural background and unemployment she says (Sperling, 15 June), she says. She explains that at the moment, politicians want to get one of the five mobile police stations of the city out there, because the quarter is labelled as very dangerous.

Sperling tells that one should always distinguish between the view from inside and the view from outside, when discussing the areas on the outskirts of the city. What was discovered is that indeed, actually speaking to the Locality Coordinators that work in the peripheral localities, provides a different story than the general view. An example is CLC Sabine Behrens who Works in the STZ in Marzahn-Nord and lives since 1986 in Marzahn West on the edge of the city. She really likes to live here as she enjoys the proximity to nature and finds that she is well connected well to the city centre. She, and also other ‘experts’ from outer districts tell me about their often village-like structures, the contacts between some of its residents and the lower sense of anonymity. In Marzahn, many residents want to get involved, tell Behrens and Victoria Lopreno (7 June) me during the interview. These active residents try to change the general prejudice of ‘Marzahn, Platte, Fremdenfeindlichkeit’ (transl.: Marzahn, Flats, Xenophobia’), something one cannot generally say about the borough and its residents, they go on to explain (7 June). Lopreno adds that “[a] strong sense of self-awareness has developed among the residents. Perhaps also because of this negative attribution” (Sylvia Lopreno, 7 June). It had to be kept in mind however, that this activeness does by far not count for all of the localities inhabitants.

Also Sperling (14 June) repeatedly tries to fight the stigma of the quarter Heerstraße Nord as being the ‘most far out’ and a ‘dangerous ghetto’ of the city through actions like ‘Schöne Grüße aus Heerstraße Nord’ (see paragraph 6.1.2). She explains that while the statistics are sober indeed – there is a lot of child poverty, unemployment, and a majority of the residents has a non-European background – the perceived high criminality is not true, “that is the interesting aspect”, Sperling says. A likewise situation is noted in Lichterfelde Süd, the foremost poorest quarter of Steglitz-Zehlendorf, which is known as the most prosperous borough of Berlin. Albeit the poverty- and unemployment rates are very high here, there are actually relatively little conflicts between the residents, says CLC Tomas Mampel (8 June) who works in the Centre of the locality Lichterfelde.

Another thing that many of the outer localities have in common is that most of their buildings are relatively young. Many of the so-called ‘Plattenbauten’ in the peripheral localities of the former east, where build during the period of the former divide. This results to a strange mixture when flâneuring through the old centres of what once were eastern villages next to Berlin. Over the years, these villages were included in the large urban space. An example thereof is ‘Alt Marzahn’, a street stemming from the time when locality Marzahn was still a village of its own (see Plate 12). The houses on either side and the little church in the middle of the street, are much in contrast to the large
‘Plattenbauten’ that one can always spot somewhere on the horizon.

In several peripheral localities in the former west of the city, new buildings were constructed during the sixties. Germans from the centre moved there. Living there was regarded as a form of “prestige, as it was always the case with new buildings”, explains CLC Thomas Mampel about the now rather poor quarter Lichterfelde Süd where around seventy percent of the population has a migration background. Also CLC Sylvia Stepprath who works Gropiusstadt, a locality in the south of the borough Neukölln tells me “[m]any people moved here from locality Neukölln where they had lived in older buildings and were happy that they could live here in a modern newly constructed building”. Over the years however, the ‘modern buildings’ in the peripheral areas became regarded less prestigious, and many Germans that could choose, decided to move away. The residency of these localities has changed: “[…] more and more migrants moved here […] is has become more colourful”, explains Stepprath. Furthermore, the unemployed rate went up.

This development depends in part on the fact that, overall, the rents in the peripheral localities of Berlin are still relatively low compared to other more central localities and boroughs of the city. “Many families are moving here that do not have a lot of money” CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June) explains about peripheral locality Marzahn, were child- and elderly- poverty form one of the challenges. Also CLC Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June) explains about the locality Hackenfelde in borough Spandau, that the people that move there are people with a rather low income and often a
migration background: “In the meanwhile, over forty percent of people with a migration background live here”. The families that are a little better off, often distance themselves by sending their children off to school in the centre.

The pressure of the development in the centre leading to displacement is thus notable in the peripheral localities of the city. As CLC Lars Schmitz (18 May) explains: “It is there [in the peripheral localities] where the people that are no longer able to afford anything in the city centre gather. For example because they only live from their unemployment benefit. And as a result, the problems shift to there. When in such a housing block for example 90 percent of the people is unemployed, then the mixture is missing. That is a problem which is arriving more and more”. Housing in the peripheral localities of the urban space is thus not very popular. People either live here because they have been living here for their whole lives, as it often is the case in the former eastern peripheral localities, or because they have no other choice due to their rather low income. Different from the full-packed centre, in the periphery affordable space does still exist.

It is therefore also in the periphery where accommodations for the large number of refugees that has arrived in the city are placed in non-used buildings or newly constructed. “This is the interesting phenomenon”, says Mampel shaking his head, “that everywhere where social problems are already piling up or collide, such an accommodation is build”. Indeed, the fact that most of these accommodations are located outside of the city centre brings along further b/ordering dynamics (see sub-paragraph 4.3.2 and 5.6.2) and subsequent challenges one of which is the frequently mentioned problem of ‘Sozialneid’ (transl.: ‘social jealousy’). This refers to the situation wherein “a part of the people [especially those who are unemployed] sees the increased number of refugees in the locality as competition, although it has nothing to do with their own situation, which developed way before”, CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June) explains.

It has to be noted also, that different from the current discussion, there are a few peripheral localities of which the population is very affluent in comparison to the rest of the city. The most frequently mentioned example thereof is the outer borough Steglitz-Zehlendorf in the south-west of the city, where parts of some localities consist of only colonies of villas and detached houses. It is here where some of the famous Berliners reside. And it is here, where such thing as a bad public transportation connection with the centre plays close to no role, as people use cars, explains Thomas Mampel (8 June).

To recapitulate; many people that have to struggle with existential foundations and the consequences thereof live in the peripheral localities of urban space Berlin. The fact that displaced people from the centre increasingly continue to search for living space here and the fact that most of the refugee accommodations are constructed there where the already less prosperous live, indeed bring along new challenges and problems. On the other hand however, in these peripheral localities, there are village-like structures and amongst a part of their residents there is commitment, encounter and willingness to undertake and support each other, something which the ‘outside’ view does not often
take into account. Although the gentrification processes themselves are not (yet) present in the peripheral boroughs, their effects are felt in the periphery and; “at the moment there are a few new housing projects, where the price per square meter is also not cheap anymore” (Lopreno, 7 June).

4.2.4 The localities ‘in between’

What derives from the previous two sub-paragraphs is that the b/ordering dynamic between Berlin’s centre and Berlin’s periphery is very dynamic and complex. It is constantly moving, in direction ‘outwards’, to be precise. As it arrived from the in the field assembled information, the centre-periphery divide alone, is not able to explain the full complexity of this movement towards the outside and the ways in which this manifests itself in those localities that are located precisely there where the moving border between centre and periphery is located. This area just outside of the city centre is very relevant to have a closer look at. It is an area in transition, an area where, in a sense, a mixture of both, developments of the centre and developments of the periphery take place and come together. This sub-paragraph therefore focusses on those localities that are located in this area; the localities ‘in between’.

The ‘in between’ localities are described by the locality ‘experts’ as having urban structures, rather than village-like structures as the peripheral localities (Lars Smitz, 18 May). Also different from the peripheral localities, is that these localities are mostly easily to reach with public transportation, often even by subway. Compared to the central localities that are very diverse, constantly changing and full of visitors, the population living in these localities is less prone to a constant flux of people that come and go. Compared to the peripheral localities, ‘in between’ localities are not the place where the poorest displaced people move to, as they are already too expensive for them. In many of these ‘in between’ localities “[s]everal generations have lived [t]here already for many years and the average age of the population is relatively high. This age structure says: the older people are not as mobile and are hence focussed more on the locality around them” explains CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May).

This is, for example, the case with the in the beginning of the nineteenth Century build locality Siemensstadt. As the name suggests, most people that came to reside here in that period were working in the Siemens factory. Although this factory has moved in the meantime, this fact has its influence on the social structure of today. The majority of the population is old and consists of the retired Siemens working class, explains CLC Lars Schmitz (18 May). This resulted in the fact that most of them have a strong identification with the Kiez. Specific to this ‘in between’ locality is that, cultural background does not play a large role in this Kiez-identification, as, through the Siemens period, “the long-established German population has long been accustomed to the fact that there are not only full-blood Germans walk around on the streets”, as Schmitz puts it. However, the contact between people however, did not remain as people do no longer meet each other in their work place.

The ‘in between’ localities, located between the ‘beloved’ and full centre and the rather poor periphery, are undergoing a slow but steady transformation in several ways. The following words of
CLC Sabine Kanis who works in Hohenschönhausen Süd, a quarter of another locality of borough Lichtenberg (30 May) explain this slow but steady information quite clearly. She describes her locality as:

"Quite fragmented. At all corners and ends something cracks. A lot of new things have begun, but one also holds on to the old. It is quite in upheaval at the moment or, in construction. There are many gaps filled with houses, old areas are being built over."

Though not with such high speed as in the centre, the composition of residents in the ‘in between’ localities is changing. Being adjacent to the city centre makes them a fair option for those people that can no longer pay their rents in the centre but wish to not “go so far out” (Lars Schmitz, 18 May) and have the money to fulfil this wish. Often, it are the young families that decide to move here to settle down, as they noticed that it is nearly impossible to find something within ‘the ring’. Also in Lichtenberg Mitte the people that move there are often families with a low to middle income who can no longer afford the adjacent central locality Friedrichshain, explains CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May). “The displacement that takes place in the centre can be felt here”, says also Thomas Potyka, social worker concerned with social space-orientated networking in quarter Hohenschönhausen-Süd.

What remains to be seen, according to him, is whether the somewhat affluent people that move into the newly constructed housing blocks will ‘belong’ in the Kiez.

Furthermore, like in the centre, also in these ‘in between’ localities the rents are jumping up and it becomes increasingly difficult to find an apartment. For the long-established residents this is not as relevant because they have a rental contract from years ago, but for their children and for the newly-moved residents it is, when they do not belong to ‘the better-earning’, CLC Lars Schmitz (18 May) explains. In his locality it however not yet the case “that the Latte Macchiato Cafés are opening, that there suddenly are yoga studios and that the old people question ‘where did my cheap backer go?’” Schmitz says with a little smile. Even in the almost peripheral quarter Tegel Süd of ‘in between’ locality Tegel in borough Reinickendorf, where simultaneously rather less prosperous people live or move to, an increase in rent is can be noticed says Elvira Smolaka (7 June) who has lived here for a long time now. What is not yet present in the ‘in between’ localities, is the ‘cultural gentrification’, as Schmitz names it. But this is something that might increase once the apartments of the older generation are vacated and another clientele will arrive.

In the ‘in between’ locality Pankow in the same-named borough Pankow, this is however already the case. The rent prices have indeed increased quite rapidly over the previous years and the average population becomes younger as many families move over there from the neighbouring centre locality Prenzlauer Berg. The people with less money often have move to Pankow’s most peripheral localities Buch and Karo. In contrary to Siemensstadt, here, more and more cafés, restaurants and shops do already open around the central square of the locality, tells CLC Ira Freigang (1 June). A similar extend of transformation can be seen in ‘in between’ locality Reinickendorf, says CLC
Seemann (15 June). There, the borough administration is highly concerned with the ‘exhilarating’ of the public space in certain streets.

Hence, in these ‘in between’ localities developments of centre and periphery collide. On the one hand, and similar to what takes place in the peripheral localities, new residents are arriving here that could not find a place in the expensive city centre but who can afford to not move ‘all the way out’. On the other hand, “there are areas where it already starts a little with the gentrification” (Thomas Potyka, 30 May), similar to the developments taking place in the centre. Therefore, “all possible kinds of inhabitants” (Sabine Kanis, 30 May) reside here. The extend of the transformation and the composition of residents of course depend on how close the ‘in between’ locality is located to a locality in the centre where gentrification takes place, and furthermore it can differ between former eastern and western ‘in between’ localities.

In short; this paragraph showed that the b/ordering dynamic between centre and periphery that is present in urban space Berlin today, is of a very fluid nature. It is constantly moving, mainly in an outwards direction because, as CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) recapitulatory puts it “there are almost no evasive opportunities for citizens within the city centre. To find work, to find accommodation, to find training places”. This outwards movement is partly responsible for other b/ordering dynamics that are present in urban space Berlin, between for example different groups of people (see paragraph 4.3). Furthermore, this paragraph showed that solely the distinction between centre and periphery, between inside and outside ‘the ring’ or between scene- and non-scene boroughs is too simple to describe this complex b/ordering dynamic in question. Therefore, the localities ‘in between’ which are located in the area where the dynamic outwards movement is taking place and where hence both, inner- and outer city developments manifest themselves. The big questions that this leaves us with is: what will happen when this outwards movement continues its way towards the now peripheral city localities?

CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June) from peripheral locality Marzahn, shares her concern while shaking her head: “I do have the fear that the displacement will once also take place here, further in direction outside, to Brandenburg”.

4.3 Long-established and newly-arrived residents

The third contemporary in/visible b/ordering dynamic that is present in urban space Berlin is that between long-established residents, with German or non-German background, and newly-arrived residents, be they investors, ‘expats’, tourists or people who fled from their country. This dynamic is strongly intertwined with the b/ordering dynamic between centre and periphery and the connected outwards movement discussed in the previous paragraph. In every interview this b/ordering dynamic between old and new residents is mentioned in some way. Depending on the locality and its position in the urban space Berlin, the long-established residents and the newly-arrived residents that collide and
therefore also the confrontations or complex new situations differ. Two of these ‘collisions’ seemed to capture this dynamic most comprehensively and will therefore the focus of this paragraph.

4.3.1 The ‘rich’ as the newly arrived

The first collision in which the b/ordering dynamic between long-established and newly arrived residents came forward is that between the long-established residents and the newly arrived and are still arriving people that are rather affluent. “The new ones are all in the centre” explains CLC Lars Schmitz (18 May), by which he refers to those newly arrived residents that can afford to live or stay in the city’s scene-boroughs ‘where it all happens’. Indeed, the localities in which this collision is mostly mentioned as a border, conflict or friction are those located in the centre.

The first group of ‘rich’ people that newly arrived are the so-called ‘Neu reichen’ (transl.: newly rich); the ‘hip’ people that can afford to move into a house or apartment in a central locality of Berlin, be they from Germany or from elsewhere in the world. “They are sometimes called ‘expats’ or something else fancy” tells me CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) who works in locality Neukölln. “Young people that stay for a while and then leave again. This changes the neighbourhood a lot”, she continues. CLC Susanne Besch (2 May) who works in locality Prenzlauer Berg, explains that “[t]hey [the newly-arrived residents] do not concern themselves with the general daily life. They swim on a wave of ‘Prenzlauer Berg; what a wonderful quarter’”. Similar to what informant Janna Völpel (5 May) mentions, CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch says that this collision of old and new residents creates a conflict between different styles of life. “Between people that want to have a rest at a certain hour, and people that want to party ‘properly’”. Furthermore, many long-established, often German, residents are overwhelmed by this much internationality, says Katharina Kühnel who also works in locality Neukölln; “That everyone speaks other languages, that the people in the cafés do not even speak German with them” (23 May). In line with Besch, also Maurer-Kartal explains that “[f]or these people [the newly-moved residents] the locality itself has no meaning, they use it to live in but they contribute nothing because most of their life takes place elsewhere”. Whereas they want to go to ‘their’ Turkish shop at the corner, they do not let their children, if they have some, go to school with the children of this same Turkish shop owner, she elaborates.

In many central localities, such as Neukölln and Kreuzberg, long-established residents have set up initiatives to fight increased rents. Also in the public space they express their anxieties and their anger. In locality Schöneberg of the borough Tempelhof-Schöneberg next to the popular Kreuzberg for example, an initiative of long-established residents hung up banners saying ‘Please piss off!’ tells me CLC Anette Mauer-Kartal (20 June). The banner was directed at the affluent new neighbours, often called ‘YUPpies & DINKs’; standing for ‘Young Urban Professionals’ and ‘Double Income No Kids’.

During the conducted ethnographic flâneries, it was also possible to notice this collision of
long-established and new actors on the city’s stage. For example, when I passed by ‘Wagenburg Lohmühle’,
situated along the *Landwehr Canal* in the former border strip between the boroughs Kreuzberg and Treptow-Köpenick. Wagenburg Lohmühle is a little caravan camp were a small group of caravan dwellers who fashionate an alternative, sober way of living in the city, resides since the *Wende* when this space, like many others in the former border area, was unwanted and vacant. Today, various posters and messages sprayed under a nearby bridge gave away the current anxiety of these residents that are threatened to be displaced (see *Plate 13*).

In central locality Friedrichshain, where resistance has a long tradition (Jugend [widerstand]museum, see paragraph 6.1.1), the conflict between the more prosperous newly-moved and the long-established residents, or at least those that are involved in the leftist scene, is very visible through banners, posters and tags, seemingly screaming from every street corner. In some cases they take the conflict one level higher by not only expressing themselves against investments, high rents and displacement, but also against capitalism as a whole. This is for example the case in the notorious Rigaer Straße on which a few houses are still squatted (see *Plate 14 and 15*). Here, from time to time, cars or waste bins of the fellow *Kiez*-residents are to be the victims of this hate against capitalism, as it is difficult ‘to find its face’. While one could doubt whether the usage of this type of means is the right way to show disagreement, they do rightly point out that “[n]ow they [the ‘rich’ newly-moved] are coming here, they are displacing and replacing the long-established residents” and that “[Berlin] is increasingly coveted and occupied only by a certain financial circle” (Neriman Kurt, 18 May).

38 See website Wagenburg Lohmühle: http://www.lohmuehle-berlin.de/blubb/wir-ueber-uns/
The second group of ‘rich’ people that is mentioned as ‘newly arrived’ in the central localities is the large number of tourists that annually visits the German capital. Especially in the localities Kreuzberg and Neukölln the CLCs told me about the many conflicts that this collision between long-established residents and short-time visitors brings about. Both are struggling with what CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) calls ‘neighbourhood tourism’: “The old to-do lists are out. The people search ‘the unique’, ‘the unusual’” she says. This does not only result in frequent conflicts around issues such as noise and garbage, as CLC Katarina Kühnel (23 May) explained, but also in a decrease of the shared Kiez-feeling explains Kurt (18 May):

“The streets are no longer a communal living room, there are close to no local pups anymore. Tourism is a big factor. Tourism has absolutely nothing to search for in neighbourhoods were residents live”.

Thirdly, there are the private house owners and investors that are also part of the prosperous newly-arrived actors and subsequently of this b/ordering dynamic between ‘old’ and ‘new’ that is present in Berlin today. The private house owners, who often reside outside of the city themselves, buy houses in good locations, mostly in the city’s centre. After renovating these houses they increase the rents up to an amount that is only affordable to a rather affluent population. Multiple City Locality Coordinators of central localities mention a current massive transition into privately owned houses that is going on in their surroundings.

Furthermore, Berlin is the operating space for many construction projects of investors, who come both from Germany as well as from foreign countries and ace also on ‘the beloved centre’ (see Plate 16). Also this part of the b/ordering dynamic between long-established and newly-arrived actors on the stage of Berlin was noticeable during the conducted ethnographic flâneries, as the following excerpt from the blog illustrates:

“No matter where you are walking in the city, at least somewhere on the horizon you will notice a construction crane through which the urban space as storyteller tells the on-going story of the border between constructing something new and reconstruction something old, for which Berlin has been famously fated already in 1910 by Karl Scheffler as ‘always to become and never to be’”.

Along the eastern shore of the Spree for example, the former death strip has turned into an investment site for often foreign companies. The best known is ‘Mediaspree’39 (see Plate 17), which is located across the street from the famous East Side Gallery. It is a project which came to be central in debates over whether or not there should be development at iconic public monuments of the city and in debates over the ownership of scarce ‘Freiräume’ (transl.: free public spaces) and the battle over ‘the right to the city’.

39 See article on Media Spree on website Berliner Zeitung: http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/berlin/--3795142
Source: Hermann, OKK, 2017

Plate 17 ‘Investment-robots’: Construction cranes entering the evening-air along the Spree
Source: Schlette, 2017
In short, one way in which the b/ordering dynamic between long-established and newly-arrived residents currently takes play in urban space Berlin is through the collision between long-established residents and different groups of relatively ‘rich’ newcomers, such as ‘expats’, ‘YUPpies & DINKs’, tourists, private house owners and investors that can afford whatever they aim for in the city’s centre. As a consequence of this collision, locals are increasingly pushed away from their houses as well as from the public space. Regardless of their nationality but dependent on the size of their wallet. This subsequently brings about further b/ordering dynamics between new and old actors in other areas of the urban space and therefore is strongly connected to the b/ordering dynamic between centre and periphery.

4.3.2 The ‘immigrant’ or ‘refugee’ as the newly arrived

The second collision that is part of the b/ordering dynamic between long-established and newly arrived residents in urban space Berlin, is the collision where ‘the immigrant’ or ‘the refugee’ figures as the newly-arrived actor in opposition to the long-established residents. Nearly all locality ‘experts’ mention this collision.

The first way in which it plays itself out is of a spatial nature. As various CLCs and other informants explain, also in this case the b/ordering dynamic between the centre and the periphery plays a role. Informant Janna Völpel (5 May) explains how most refugees at first arrive in the centre of the city, where they live in sport halls that function as emergency accommodations. These halls, that were all filled over the course of 2015 and 2016 because of the so-called ‘refugee crises and Angela Merkels famous words ‘Wir schaffen das’ (transl.: ‘we can do it’), are now taken back for their original use. This means that their residents have to move to more permanent refugee accommodation centres, which are mainly located in the rather peripheral localities of the city such as Marzahn (Sabine Behrens and Victoria Lopreno, 7 June) and Hackenfelde (Elke Schönrock-Astilla, 9 June), or Hohenschönhausen (Sabine Kanis and Thomas Potyka, 30 May) “because it is too full for that” explains CLC Neriman Kurt (18 may).

According to Völpel (5 May), the moving of refugees from the centre to the margins of the city is problematic in various ways. To begin with, the accommodations are often located in the most remote places of the already peripheral localities or in rather deserted quarters. This makes them very complicated to reach, as illustrated by the following excerpt from my field notes (10 May):

“It was the first time that I had to use the public transportation for so long and change between S-Bahn, metro and bus so many times before arriving at a destination which still belonged to Berlin. I took this long journey and the not-knowing of where I would end up as part of the experience. The long journey from the place where I reside in the centre of the city to the emergency accommodation in the borough Spandau, one could interpret, as a form of a border too. Whenever people from the centre want to get to the so-called Heim, or, whenever
its residents want or need to go to the centre, they have to invest not only two hours of their time for the public transport but also possess the knowledge of how to use these various types of transportation to displace themselves from A to B. In that sense, the Heim on the Mertenstraße, in the building of what used to be a cigarette factory, is very isolated.”

A further problem that the moving of refugees from the centre to the margins of the city holds, is the difference in terms of urban environment (see also paragraph 4.2) that they have to face when they move. The following quotation from Katarina Kühnel (23 May) helps to illustrate:

“Then, somewhere where the same people have been living for the past forty years, out of the sudden all refugees are going. This makes them all overwhelmed. The refugees meet people who are not so open or used to new things, and the people who are not so open meet new people with whom they cannot begin so much”.

As previously discussed, in the central localities the population is already more diverse. Often it is here where there is much willingness to help. The outer localities where the refugees have to move to are mainly located in the former east were the residents are not as used to a diversification of the neighbourhood, as explained by Sabrina Hermann (22 May) (see also paragraph 4.1.3).

It is also mostly in the former eastern and rather peripheral localities where the CLCs brought up issues regarding ‘Sozialneid’ and anxieties and prejudices of the long-established location towards the newly-arriving people from other cultural backgrounds. CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May) refers to the b/ordering dynamic between long-established residents and immigrants or refugees in the locality Lichtenberg as a ‘clash of cultures’. For many residents cultures other than those of Vietnam and Russia are ‘unknown’ and therefor they are easily influenced by the media and have many prejudices, Hermann explains. According to Thomas Potyka (20 May), “[r]ight-wing extremism plays an almost traditional role in the borough Lichtenberg”, but in locality Hohenschönhausen, where he works, “it is of a rather invisible nature”.

Sylvia Lopreno (7 June) explains that the stereotype about eastern locality Marzahn does indeed have a real foundation: “The people here are not always open, they do have prejudices, fears and even hostile feelings […] [they] tend towards this direction because of their background and their financial situation”. CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June) adds that a part of the people sees the arrival of refugees as competition, because they already have so little themselves. However, “there were no organised protest against the MUF (see paragraph 5.6) when they constructed it. And there is no established right-wing scene” says Lopreno (7 June), which is contrary to the general perception of Marzahn. In locality Hohenschönhausen of borough Lichtenberg there were some protests before the construction of a refugee accommodation “but once the people were living there and it interests no one anymore, then the anger is over” tells CLC Sabine Kanis (30 May). Scepticism about the construction of a MUF was also present in the quarter Tegel Süd of the locality Tegel in the borough
Reinickendorf. The people where “[...] [r]eticent and observing. Some had to get used to the fact that they smoked the Shisha on the doorstep” tells CLC Elvira Smoloka (7 June) who works there. This phenomenon scepticism turning acceptation is something that Kanis (30 May) has seen repeatedly in the past years:

“When someone new arrives who has 'the strangeness of the other', one stops with looking strange at the foreigners who live here longer, such as the Russians and the Vietnamese. This is exactly the same as it happened with the Turks for example. They are known now, they have established themselves in the meanwhile, so they are no longer so strange. All of a sudden, one has become a 'we' and starts looking at the next [new] ones”.

Also Smoloka (7 June) says that the relation between long-established residents and those immigrants that have moved a longer time ago is quite ‘okay’.

Kanis (30 May) warns however, that one has to keep in mind that not every conflict takes place visibly in the public space. This is also what CLC Sylvia Stepprath (15 June) says about the b/ordering dynamic between long-established and newly-arrived residents in the locality Gropiusstadt in the south of Neukölln where she works: “It is not publicly shown. You can notice it more in the conversations you have with people. Then the German neighbours sometimes complain; ‘yes, for them there is always something done’ [...] It is all just talk, there is no real reason”.

It has to be noted that also in the central localities of the city certain groups of people are made responsible for the conflicts that are happening and there is also a lot of jealousy. Often these groups are those ‘at the margins of society’ says CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) and explains that “here too, in the allegedly free Kreuzberg, there is discrimination”.

Generally however, in most of the central localities the coordinators mention mainly the commitment and willingness to help of the residents in the period wherein large numbers of refugees arrived around two years ago. CLC Susanne Besch (2 May) tells me about the many support circles in locality Prenzlauer Berg, CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) mentions the high numbers of volunteers in locality Kreuzberg that took over tasks that the City Administration was overwhelmed with, and CLC Petra Sperling tells about the association in her locality, named ‘Wedding Hilft’. Also in the localities ‘in between’ (see paragraph 4.2.4) and some peripheral localities the helpfulness of long-established residents has been present, but often it is currently slowly fading. In Siemensstadt for example, there are fewer volunteers now than before, explains Lars Schmitz (18 May).

To recapitulate; the third contemporary in/visible b/ordering dynamic that is present in urban space Berlin manifests itself between different groups of residents: Between the long-established residents and newly-arrived residents. Whereas in the centre, this dynamic is between the long-established and the newly-arrived ‘rich’ residents, in the periphery the collision that came forward is between the long-established residents and the newly arriving immigrants or refugees.
What has to be noted and was importantly pointed out by CLC Elke Schönrock-Astilla however, is that in the periphery the ‘newly-arrived’ are also those people that are displaced from the centre but are not immigrants or refugees: “the new ones are then, the people that are not very prosperous, regardless of their cultural background”. Taking this observation into account, this sub-paragraph could also be renamed into ‘the poor as the newly arrived’.

Furthermore, a difference in willingness to help the newcomers seems to be present between former east and west as well as between the centre and the periphery of the city. At the same time however, the stereotypes about some peripheral localities as being extremely hostile towards refugees, are not always true. What is true for both collisions discussed above is that, as noted by CLC Seemann (15 June) “[p]erhaps the most important border is the border between openness and closeness towards others”.

4.4 Spatial borders within

Fourthly, there are several spatial borders within localities that are mentioned by the City Locality Coordinators during the interviews as present b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin. These borders, often running between the different Kieze of a locality, often define where people are going, how the move and how far they move, says CLC Susanne Besch (2 May) during the interview. “This movement is very often characterised by daily routines”, according to CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May). “If you look at these, you can see that there are quite different Kieze within the locality Lichtenberg Mitte”. Also CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June) describes the different quarters of locality Marzahn as having a different ‘life feeling’ to them.

In many cases these spatial borders ‘within’ are physically marked by certain streets, train tracks or S-Bahn bridges. Nearly every locality coordinator mentions one such example. These physical borders are seldom passed by the residents, explains Thomas Potyka (30 May). They “make sure that people do not cross them and stay in their small quarters” adds also CLC Maike Janssen (13 June).

Moreover, several City Locality Coordinators explicitly mention the strong differences that are present within the locality they work in. Within the quarter Tegel Süd, in the southern part of the locality Tegel of the borough Reinickendorf for example, there are two very different parts, as is described by CLC Elvira Smoloka. On one side, there are privately owned often detached houses, the people that live there have a job or another type of income. In the other part, there are houses of two social housing companies. The population that resides here consists of the older generation that lives there since the Kiez was constructed in 1987, a lot of unemployed people, people with a low income that have moved here because they were displaced from the centre, and many Russian Germans, Turks and refugees from various countries. A similar contrast within a locality is explained also by CLC Thomas Mampel (8 June) from the City Locality Centre Lichterfelde in borough Steglitz-Zehlendorf. As he explains, Lichterfelde includes very different areas. Whereas Lichterfelde West consists of a
colony of villas from the eighteenth Century and subsequent affluent residents, the in the sixties build Lichtenfelde Süd, located on the edge of the city, has a relatively poor population and a child poverty rate of fifty percent. This is very contrasting to the borough Steglitz-Zehlendorf where supposedly the ‘rich and beautiful’ reside. Also CLC Seemann (15 June) tells about a contrast in her locality Reinickendorf between the rather prosperous people that live in the north where not many people with a migration background live, and the less affluent people that reside in the more ‘mixed’ south, where the people of the northern part do not often come to.

Lastly, there is a rather invisible spatial border that exists within the localities between people, that is mentioned by the locality ‘experts’. It is the border of living ‘side by side’ but not with each other, that differs from the b/ordering dynamic between the explicit groups of long-established and newly-arrived residents of any kind, because it includes all residents of the subsequent locality. CLC Neriman Kurt (18) tells me that “[e]veryone has their place, their space. But the coexistence would have to be boosted again”. CLC Lars Schmitz who works in Siemenstadt also mentions that the contact between people is no longer as self-evident as ‘back in the days’. About Neukölln, CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) says that “contact is missing”. According to CLC Katharina Kühnel one can speak of a non-solidary acting “because the people do not really know each other. The borders increase in the sense that much more people live and work close to each other but have less and less points of contact”. This is also similar to what CLC Anette Maurer-Kartal (20 June) tells about the central locality Schöneberg.

“But how bad is it that you do not have a mixture everywhere?” questions CLC Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June) as we speak about these b/ordering dynamics within her locality Hackenfelde in borough Spandau, and she continues to share her thoughts including this critical note that should be kept in the back of our heads:

“People look for the places where they feel comfortable. This is often a place where you have something in common with others. You are looking for your own somewhere, and you are at best open for something new. But not everyone has to be interested in everyone”.

What derives from this paragraph is that even within a locality or quarter itself, certain borders are experienced by the residents. These can be, but are not necessary, marked physically by certain streets, railway tracks or bridges.

4.5 Young and Old

The fourth in/visible b/ordering dynamic that is mentioned by the City Locality Coordinators as present in urban space Berlin today, is that between the younger and the older residents. It is included in this chapter as a short paragraph because the ‘experts’ from the field frequently mentioned it, but as will be shown, it overlaps to a large extend with the other b/ordering dynamics. Here, a few examples will be shared.
Thomas Potyka (30 May) calls the border between generations ‘abstract’ and mentions that one can see it through the different things that different age groups are occupied with, something which can cause frictions, he says. “They have different interests” notes also CLC Ira Freigang (1 June). CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May) refers to this border as the ‘clash of generations’ and names a few examples of cases where older people complain about the noise of children playing on the street till late at night. “People who are a bit older and want to have their rest, are sometimes annoyed by the children's screams” CLC Katharina Kühnel (23 May) also says. Often, the older residents are not as visible on the streets or in public places (Christine Skowronska-Koch, 22 May; Maike Janssen, 13 June). “This is something that you sometimes have to clearly say to the ‘expats’ or the people that come here to have fun. That there are people living here, for a long time already, and that they also have a right to”, explains CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May).

As becomes clear from the examples above, the b/ordering dynamic between old and young often coincides with the aforementioned dynamic between long-established and newly-arrived residents (see paragraph 4.3.1); the b/ordering dynamic of different ‘life styles’.

Furthermore, and as noted by CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June), this generational conflict is already ‘ancient’ and will be very likely to naturally continue to exist for a long time, if not forever. Therefore, in order to grasp the continuity of the borders, frictions and contrasts on Berlin’s stage, it will not be further analysed in this thesis.

4.6 Poor and rich

“Money, or the non-existent money is a big topic”
(Maike Janssen, 13 June).

“Your money decides whether you belong”
(Seemann, 15 June).

The sixth and last b/ordering dynamic present in urban space Berlin that comes forward from the in the through the interviews assembled information is the b/ordering dynamic between the ‘rich’ and the ‘poor’ actors on Berlin’s stage. This dynamic is mentioned not only by the locality ‘experts’ whom I interviewed, but became also apparent during the conducted ethnographic flâneries as well as in my daily live in the urban space. Often it coincides and intertwines with the b/ordering dynamic between east and west, between centre and periphery and between long-established and newly-arrived residents in various localities of the city, as also noted by CLC Lars Schmitz (18 May). It seems, so to say, overarching.

A difference between the ‘poor’ and the ‘rich’ localities and subsequently between the residents of urban space Berlin, is noted on the basis of both, an east-west dynamic, and a centre-periphery dynamic. Some of the ‘poor’ localities, mostly located in the former eastern part or in the periphery, or in both, struggle with high percentages of child- and elderly poverty, as is the case in for
example the localities Staaken, Marzahn, Tegel Süd, Hackenfelde and Lichterfelde Süd.

Also within localities the b/ordering dynamic of wealth is ‘very present’ and sometimes becomes visible in certain images, says CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May). As an example she tells me how over the past years rather chic shops have been opening in her Kiez in Neukölln. Shops where the long-established residents would never enter as many of them could never afford anything that is for sale in there.

Furthermore, this b/ordering dynamic manifests itself very strongly in the previously discussed issue of increasing rents and subsequent displacement of those people who cannot afford the higher prices. According to CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May), this is where the frictions begin. “Affordable housing for those people that come here and do not have much money” is what is needed most, says also CLC Claudia Schwarz (15 June). And also CLC Lars Schmitz (18 May) makes this point and explains that “in general, Berlin is a poor city” where there is only one group of people for whom things are relatively good. This group consists of the people that do have money and often come from the outside. In the following quotation he elaborates further on the b/ordering dynamic between ‘poor’ and ‘rich’:

“I see this border rising, because everything is concentrated only on the most prosperous layer of people. These are the wanted inhabitants. While others have to look at how they can fight for the even scarcer resources of any form which lie on the edge and become became ever littler. This is a huge problem”.

CLC Seemann (15 June) calls this dynamic the most determining and general in Berlin, because, in the end, it is your money that decides where in the city you belong, she says. Also CLC Maike Janssen thinks of this border as ‘the most extreme’ and points out that for the extend in which people are affected by this dynamic, it does not matter “[w]hether they are Berlin citizens or newly-moved from elsewhere in Germany, the neighbouring countries or even further away”. They all seem to agree that “money defines […] if you can (continue to) live where you feel comfortable” (Claudia Schwarz, 15 June). Hence, as this paragraph illustrates; money, or the lack thereof, plays a role in nearly every of the previously discussed b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin. But probably most clearly, it defines the extent to which people are affected by the ‘outwards movement’ that is presently notable in urban space Berlin.

4.7 Recap

This chapter introduced the very complex and interwoven invisible and visible b/ordering dynamics that are present in urban space Berlin today. Although the variety of ways and kinds of b/ordering dynamics is a large one, six b/ordering dynamics are the most notable and experienced on the city’s stage. Firstly, there is the haunting b/ordering dynamic of the past, between the eastern and the western party of the city, manifesting itself in the extensive memory culture, in physical traces and in
more invisible remnants. Second is the b/ordering dynamic between centre and periphery, which is constantly moving in an outwards direction and slowly transforms locality ‘in between’ after locality ‘in between’. Thirdly, there is the very interrelated b/ordering dynamic between long-established and newly arrived residents, that manifests itself differently in the various localities of the city. Fourth, there are multiple borders within the various localities of the city, some of which are more physically present than others. Furthermore, there is the frequently mentioned ‘ancient’ and probably forever existing b/ordering dynamic between generations. Sixth, it was shown that the b/ordering dynamic between ‘rich’ and ‘poor’ is a really strong one, which to a large extend plays a role in all of the aforementioned b/ordering dynamics. Having brought to table which invisible b/ordering dynamics are currently present in urban space Berlin, it is now time to look under the surface and focus on how these borders are created, facilitated and sustained.
5 | Working mechanisms or; the imaginative apparatus

This chapter will delve deeper into the working mechanisms, or in Paasi’s (2009) words; the ‘imaginative apparatus’ of the previously described contemporary in/visible b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin (sub-question II.). It seeks to identify the reasons underlying the b/ordering dynamics between east and west, centre and periphery, old and new actors and poverty and wealth. This is done on the basis of the information obtained from the City Locality Coordinators during the interviews as well as through critically reading and analysing official Berlin documents and the city’s official website. The following discussion will thus not only be of a descriptive, but also of an analysing nature, which enables to look below the surface, or; behind the Berlin stage and to subsequently find the working mechanisms that create, facilitate and sustain the presently experienced intertwined b/ordering dynamics.

What derives very clearly from the answers of all locality ‘experts’ to the question of how the contrasts, frictions or borders in their localities and in Berlin as a whole have originated and why these are still existing, is that ‘various things come together’, as CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) puts it short but clear. There is thus not one single reason or one single level for the current existence of the b/ordering dynamics described in the previous chapter. In line with what Rumford (2008) argues, the working mechanisms of the b/ordering dynamics appear to consist of a ‘complex assemblage’. To get a grip on this assemblage of ‘borderwork’ in urban space Berlin, the most important working mechanisms that derive from the look behind the stage into the ‘imaginative apparatus’, will be illuminated here.

5.1 The challenge of merging two worlds

“What is a reason for many conflicts and tensions is the German/German history and the reunification. And all the fractions that have resulted from it for the people”

(Sylvia Lopreno, 7 June).

The first working mechanism that creates, facilitates and sustains the b/ordering dynamics present in urban space Berlin is the enduring challenge of ‘merging two worlds’ and the ways in which various actors have dealt therewith since the Wende in 1989. As the above quotation illustrates, both the bordered history and the unification form part of the underlying reasons for various conflicts and tensions in Berlin today.

Contrary to the general perspective, the fall of the Berlin Wall did not bring only happiness and freedom. Since the Wende, a lot of b/ordering dynamics have crystallised, says CLC Sabrina

40 ‘Die Wende’ (transl.: The Turn) refers to the complete process of change from the rule of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany and a centrally planned economy to the revival of parliamentary democracy and market economy in the German Democratic Republic (GDR) around 1989 and 1990.
Hermann (22 May). For many residents from the former GDR the unification meant that a long challenging period was ahead of them. In the quarter Marzahn Nord in locality Marzahn reside a lot of former GDR citizens, most of them are retired today. Victoria Lopreno (7 June) who works there, explains during the interview how these citizens had to retrain and adapt themselves to the ‘new world’ surrounding them. In the first place, money became a problem, as many of them went into a long period of unemployment. People that had been in the possession teacher-, professor-, doctor-, or likewise diplomas often lost their jobs, as most their titles were worth nothing anymore. They had to retrain themselves to meet the western standards or start the difficult search for another, often low-skilled job (Lopreno, 7 June). This ‘real social descent’ in the post-Wende period explains the problem of elderly poverty in the former eastern parts of the urban space today. “Many of them struggle to live from their pension money”, Lopreno (7 June) says. And also, CLC Elvira Smoloka (7 June) says that “[t]hey [the former eastern citizens] now receive different amounts of pension, this cannot be understood by many people. It should be more equal”, and expresses furthermore, that in her opinion the history of the Russian-Germans who also struggle with their unrecognized educational backgrounds, should be more taken into account as well.

During a workshop that was attended in the fieldwork period of this research project in the quarter Marzahn West in former eastern locality Marzahn, a retired man from the former east started to share a story that serves as a valuable example: Before the fall of the wall, he himself used to belong to the police corps of the GDR. He explains that after the unification, this corps was merged with de West Berlin police corps, which meant for him that he had to learn many new rules of conduct. But what was most hard for him is the constant pressure that he felt he was under. “We from the east, we were constantly looked down on, we constantly needed to proof ourselves”, he says, slowly shaking his head. This example illustrates that apart from the real social descent, also the felt depreciating of the own biography and of what used to be good in the former east is a source of dissatisfaction and tensions today (Lopreno, 7 June).

Moreover, remaining prejudices about people ‘from the other side’ are mentioned as a way in which the invisible east-west b/ordering dynamic remained up until today. These have started to develop during divided times and, due to the way in which the reunification politically and urban planning-wise was dealt with, did never completely vanish after the physical wall came down. “The older residents still identify themselves, although silently, as West Berliner and there are still certain prejudices against the ‘Ossi’s’”, CLC Lars Schmitz tells about Siemensstadt in the borough Spandau which was formerly situated in the west close to the wall. Also CLC Sylvia Stepprath (15 June) says that “there are still people that claim they can distinguish between the two and say: ‘well I notice that immediately through the clothing, that’s an ‘Ossi’”.

In a few interviews with locality ‘experts’ from rather central or western localities indeed,
conscious or unconscious perceptions of the east shone through\(^{41}\). For example, when they mention things like “many people from here would not like to move there”, with ‘there’ in this case referring to the eastern boroughs of the city. One City Locality Coordinator from the centre describes Lichtenberg as a rather ‘creepy’ place with MPD\(^{42}\) posters all over the streets. Various City Locality Coordinators used the borough Marzahn-Hellersdorf as a relatiation point to compare the situation concerning refugees in their own locality with. The following quote illustrates this:

“\textit{When the refugee accommodation was constructed here, there was some anxiety that something similar to Hellersdorf would happen. But here it was the case that a lot of volunteers have bundled their strengths [...] One wanted to oppose something to Hellersdorf}”.

Likewise, another CLC describes the situation of the opening of newly constructed ‘Tempohomes’ for refugees (see paragraph 5.6) in the locality, where only five people stood with a German flag opposed to five hundred people that wanted to wish the refugees welcome and added: “this is something quite different than in for example in Marzahn-Hellersdorf”.

These prejudices might result from, or are sustained by, the fact that there are not many people that move over the former border between east and west, except for the people that live in the centre, as mentioned by various locality ‘experts’. “I know a lot of people that do not move over the former border”, says for example CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June). And Thomas Mampel (8 June), Locality Coordinator in the borough Steglitz-Zehlendorf shares the following story:

“\textit{So for me, this East West theme is still a thing. I cannot get it out of my head. I was born 1962 and the wall was already there. When the wall then fell in '89, I would not have thought it would be possible that it remains so long in my head that I am a West Berliner. When I move through the city, I'm rarely in the East}”.”

“Sometimes the reasons for this [non-movement] are ideological [...] but there does not always have to be a political or ideological reason”, notes CLC Sabine Behrens (7 June) and explains that some people just want to stay in their neighbourhhood. “Also, partly because when people are older they rather stay where it is familiar to them”.

On the other hand, there are of course also people who do cross the former border and enjoy it:

“\textit{When it was still possible, I simply drove by car under the Brandenburger Tor. Just to have this feeling 'to overcome the border' again and again and again and again. Over and over. To play this out for years and rejoice oneself anew}” (Sabine Kanis, 30 May).

\(^{41}\) Out of respect for the interviewees and the gratitude for their openness, for these quotes their privacy with be protected.

\(^{42}\) The Nationaldemokatische Partei Deutschlands (transl.: National Democratic Party of Germany) is a far-right and ultranational political party in Germany founded in 1964 as successor to the German Reich Party.
Furthermore, the present east-west b/ordering dynamic is a result from the way in which one dealt with the divided past in a physical sense. As Ward (2016) writes, the immediate years after the fall of the wall were marked by a clear reticence in terms of preserving anything that had to do with the divided history. Instead of focusing on a way to reconcile and reunify also on the psychological level, the focus was on fast new constructions and on filling gaps, as will be described in the next paragraph. “I think they have removed far too much from the old GDR. It should have been more integrated, it should be seen”, says CLC Petra Sperling (14 June) on this matter. A few years later, the experience of the long-term division has become central to the practices of an emerging ‘memory culture’. This however, focusses not on the experience of the people for whom this division still counts in their daily lives.

Hence, the challenge of ‘merging’ of two worlds as well as the ways in which this was organised, forms one of the underlying mechanisms of some of the b/ordering dynamics that play themselves out in the Berlin today. For example, the bad financial situation of many residents residing in peripheral localities that belonged to the east, because the deprivation that developed right after the Wende continued in the next generations and concerns even children of today. Also the b/ordering dynamic between the long-established formerly eastern residents and the newly-arriving refugees in these localities – think of the anxieties, the large amount that votes for the AfD or joins a demonstration at the opening of a newly build refugee accommodation – can be thus partly explained through this working mechanism. But the b/ordering dynamic that is also sustained through this working mechanism is that of the continuing prejudices and perceptions of the people ‘on the other side’ amongst mostly the older generations, also referred to as ‘die Mauer im Kopf’ (transl.: the wall in the head). Apart from those people that move around in the centre, not many people do actually move ‘to the other side’ like CLC Sabine Kanis which means there is not much contact, which furthermore enables to facilitate and sustain the prejudices.

5.2 Investments and constructions

Secondly, the in/visible b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin are created, facilitated and sustained through the mechanism of increasingly letting investments and constructions taking place in several parts, but mostly the centre of the city. Often it is through this mechanism that several external actors get involved with the spectacle on the stage of urban space Berlin. The often foreign investment companies get to play their game in the German capital as they can bring along capital – something which is longingly awaited by the Senate that has as a task to bring the generally poor and still fragmented Berlin ‘forward’.

5.2.1 The flourishing alternative scene...

“After the fall of the border, many people first moved away from the former GDR”, explained Thomas
Potyka (30 May). “This resulted in many free spaces in the city”, he goes on, and also in many empty houses in the former east. An example thereof is the central eastern locality Prenzlauer Berg, described by CLC Susanne Besch (2 May) as already mixed and creative during the time of the wall – an exception for the former east. Located in the shadow of the wall and being left aside and run down as unwanted border area by the GDR, it became a popular quarter for artists and all kinds of people that could walk on the streets as ‘crazy as the wanted’ without annoying anyone. “And then, after the fall of the wall, the young people from the west came and occupied the empty houses in the former east. They understood what value it has to have such an apartment, something which was not as clear for the former eastern citizens”, she explains. The area became known as the area for cheap places and the art and activist collective scene developed even further. Like other central eastern localities that were run down and neglected during the divided time, it was refurbished and came to look very beautiful, tells Besch.

Subsequently, however, a period started wherein people arrived that wanted to make business out of the increasingly popular former eastern border areas of the city. Those people invested their private money in these relatively cheap houses, which would bring them a lot of profit later. This is one of the reasons that “a lot of houses are now owned by people who consider them as an investment”, says Besch, “they only think ‘ah, this is a hip neighbourhood, the prices will rise, my value will not expire, I can skim something here’”.

5.2.2 ... soon becomes an investors’ playground

Only a few years later, also investment companies saw the incredible value of the buildings located in the former eastern border-localities that came to be the centre of the city overnight. They started to buy a lot of the still cheap and run-down buildings, “this changed a lot”, Besch (2 May) goes on to explain. The ‘big change’ begun in the former eastern borough Berlin Mitte that had suddenly become the middle of the city. Slowly but steady, more and more living buildings were turned into offices, shops, bars and restaurants. The previously flourishing art-scene shifted away towards other areas. A glimpse into what the Mitte of the early nineties must have been like can however still be gained at for example the little ‘Haus Schwarzenberg’ square (field notes, 20 April).

The problem of this ‘big change’ was, as CLC Petra Sperling (14 June) says “that ‘the new’ came too soon on top of it [the fall of the wall] and this has tightened conflicts”. The incredibly fast nature of the changes and the increased amount of both German and foreign players that became involved, made it challenging to keep a clear view on all processes that were taking place at the same time. It made Berlin “an incredible patchwork carpet” as Thomas Potyka (30 May) puts it. In the same line CLC Seemann (15 June) says that “Berlin is no city, it is a puzzle”. There was no time taken to stand still and think before letting the city become such an ‘investors’ playground’. The renewal was rather short-time oriented and its main priority was, and as will be described still is, to ‘get Berlin back
on the market’, as soon as possible, to be precise. “Berlin wants to be the world city it once was. But it cannot finance itself” says Thomas Potyka (30 May). The city’s financial situation makes it largely dependent on many German funding systems but also other players that bring money to the table. This manifests itself not only in terms of letting investors playing their game and selling many of the city’s still remaining free spaces for constructions, but it is also visible through for example, the omnipresent advertisements wherever you go in the streets and metro stations (see Plate 18).

“The development is so fast that the long-established citizens can only stand there, open their mouths and ask themselves; ‘what is happening here’”, illustrates Sperling (14 June). And also CLC Sabine Kanis (30 May) explains: “It [the reason for current borders, contrasts and frictions] has a lot to do with the big and fast changes that take place here. New and further development is criticized by many people”.

Plate 18: ‘Rent advertising space call 030/705 50 40’
Source: Schlette, 2017
5.2.3 Ongoing fast constructions

“The city is uprooted”
(Seemann, 15 June).

A third way in which the mechanism of increasing investments and constructions facilitates, sustains and creates current b/ordering dynamics on the stage of Berlin, is through the ongoing fast constructions that took place yesterday, exist today and will certainly still be there tomorrow.

Thomas Potyka, who described in the previous sub-paragraph how free places originated throughout the city after the fall of the wall, finishes his story as follows: “Now, the free spaces in the city are becoming increasingly used as spaces for new ‘development projects’ and thus they become scarcer and scarcer”. Also CLC Katharina Kühnel explains: “In the city the vacant places are filled and thus there is less and less public space where people can meet”. “Nearly every empty plot is filled” (Ira Freigang, 1 June). Indeed, during the conducted ethnographic flâneries through the centre of the urban space, many places of which I knew they had been still open when I visited last time, appeared to have become either a construction site or had already transformed into a building. An example is the well-known Cuvry-Brache which used to be a free space for multiple uses and with multiple meanings for the residents of locality Kreuzberg where it is located as well as for others, as Van Duppen (2010) lively describes. According to a recent news article in the Berliner Morgenpost, the place now is being ‘dineyfiziert’ (transl.”Disneyfied’, referring to gentrified) and will serve as the base of among others offices of web company Zalando 43 (see Plate 19 and 20). “If it had gone according to what the Berlin Senate desired, one would have built apartments on the spot, some of which with a bounded rent price”, says the article. However, the investor who owns the place in the end rejected this concept. In either way, what matters most for the people to whom it meant something, is the fact that the 11,000 square metre space was sold to an investor in the first place. Also the borough administration does not agree. “Cuvry-Brache: From symbol of Kreuzberg’s Freiheit to global shopping headquarter”, writes Schmidt from the building department of the Borough Administration indignantly on his Twitter page.

Hence, whilst continuing with the fast construction, the meaning of free spaces, seems, with exception of the still free ‘Tempelhofer Feld’, to be largely left aside. As CLC Seemann (15 June) puts it: “this charm is being overbuild”. And Kühnel elaborates further by saying:

“That for what Berlin was so well-known, or still is, this self-organised city making, is in a sense made more and more difficult by politics or by international companies. It makes more boundaries. At a place where so many international corporations or private actors have bought houses or whole streets and then do not act in anyway with the people that live there in the back of their head, they do no longer have any reference to them”.

Plate 19  The Cuvry-Brache in 2013, Berlin  
Source: dpa

Plate 20  The Cuvry-Brache as a construction site in 2017, Berlin  
Source: Krauthöfer, 2017
This bridge from the important free spaces in the city of which nearly all have been overbuild during the last couple of years, to a further problem of this third way in which the mechanism of increasing investments and constructions facilitates, sustains and creates b/ordering dynamics. Namely, with the increased numbers of actors in mostly the city’s central localities, a shortage of not only open places but also of general basic needs such as housing, day-care places and study places developed; “in the schools more classes have to be set up” explains CLC Ira Freigang (1 June). This shortage, created by an increased number of actors on the urban stage, is the motor for various b/ordering dynamics, especially that between the long-established residents and the more prosperous newly-arrived residents in the centre.

To sum up; what this paragraph shows is that the ever increasing investments and constructions, form one of the underlying mechanisms of some of the b/ordering dynamics that play themselves out in urban space Berlin today. The creative alternative scene that emerged after the fall of the wall and cared for the run down houses in the former east, was soon to be displaced as Berlin became a ‘playground’ for ever more investors who in combination with “too much of rapid restructuring” (Sperling, 14 June) turned Berlin into a complex ‘puzzle’. According to CLC Petra Sperling (14 June), one should give the city more space for slow growth and growth at all. “One should wait and look first, instead of driving the changes so fast forward”. Currently, the free spaces that are of importance to many residents are built over, and through the incredible increase of actors that the investments and constructions brought about, shortages of important needs are becoming a big problem and are creating, facilitating, sustaining and even exacerbating b/ordering dynamics between the people that reside in Berlin. According to CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May), it in the end it all comes down to these ‘battles of distribution’:

“If too many people share a piece of cake, then distribution battles will also arise. It makes no difference whether the newcomer is an investor or a refugee”.

5.3 Housing and rent politics

“The train has already left, it is much too late”

Neriman Kurt (18 May).

Zooming in a bit further, the third working mechanism that creates, facilitates and sustains the b/ordering dynamics that are present today in urban space Berlin is the way in which housing and rent politics are organised in the city.

5.3.1 “Wohnen darf nicht länger Ware sein”

The development that characterises this ‘way’ the most is the transformation of housing into a
commodity. Private actors and large housing companies frequently ‘go shopping’ in the city. As CLC Anette-Maurer Kartal (20 May) says: “Right now, we have a free wild way. Deutsche Wohnen buys itself mighty in Berlin […] and you can tell”. This ‘shopping’ is only possible because the housing companies that used to be owned by the Federal State are being sold to third parties. Therefore, CLC Petra Sperling (14 June) blames the city itself for creating a large part of the problems and then not taking enough responsibility for that. City Locality Coordinator Neriman Kurt (18 May) who works in locality Kreuzberg for a long time already, describes it as follows:

“Municipal real estates were sold. This neoliberalising economic policy has destroyed much of the infrastructure and social stance. Now they try to re-communalise and buy everything back, which does not work anymore because the municipalities do not have enough money for this”.

Borough Administrations have no say in this process of selling space. They can only watch and deal with it. This explains why for example the Kreuzberg municipality cannot do anything against the current ‘disneyfication’ of their beloved Cuvry-Brache (see paragraph 5.2.3 and Plate 18 and 19).

A further problem is that even the social housing companies are not as social anymore. “They are not necessarily the top of the price reduction” says CLC Anette-Maurer Kartal (20 May) sarcastically. The rents of social housing are increasing every time the contracts expire, explains Kurt (18 May). The reason for this is in part that also social housing has become increasingly outsourced to third party ‘holders’ from the outside – again, the foreign actors pop up. “It used to be easier, when we [the City Locality Centres] had more cooperation with the housing companies. But now they were sold to an American investor and the whole business has changed a lot” illustrates CLC Thomas Mampel (8 June). And also CLC Sylvia Stepprath (15 June) tells that:

“The housing companies are not necessarily interested in neighbourhood council meetings, although they should actually participate in them. Probably this is because discussions would turn out rather negative for them, as people would say that they have enough non-social housing [...] There’s a lot of money and business behind it”.

This process is contrary to what is actually needed in a city with so much growth. “Social housing is what’s missing” says Neriman Kurt (18 May) very clearly. There is much housing built in the city, but this mainly concerns privately owned apartments or luxury houses that hardly anyone can afford – or, as it is the case with for example the Cuvry-Brache, offices of large companies who have the money to make themselves wide in the centre. “The building of affordable housing is an important theme for Berlin”, finds Lars Schmitz (18 May).

Hence; just as the aforementioned, shortages concerning free spaces, day-care places and school places, the lack of affordable housing creates, facilitates and creates b/ordering dynamics. “If there will no fundamental change in the housing policy, soon only a group of people with a certain
income will live in the centre and the localities around it” notes also Lars Schmitz. And Anette Maurer-Kartal sums it all up with a saying from a book written by Lienhard Wawzyn in the seventies, which according to her is true today more than ever: “Housing can no longer be commodity” (see Plate 21). “Here in Berlin, we have the luck that we have mixed localities and no banlieus”, she says, something which, according to her, should be kept that way with the help of everyone. And Claudia Schwarz (15 June) poses the important question of how these urban housing companies will behave in the future: “Will they make the borders even more blatant?”

5.3.2 Rising and rising rents

Secondly, and very related to the first point is the “neoliberal economic rental policy of the state […]” as CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) calls it, in this policy “[…] the existences of people are of secondary importance”. This rental policy is, according to Kurt, to a large extent responsible for the present frictions in the centre of the city: “The current rent politics make pressure. Many people cannot pay their rents […] In the city politics, one has made a lot of mistakes concerning rents”. Also CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) mentions the immense rent increase as one of the reasons for existing borders. What makes it so difficult, according to CLC Anette Maurer-Kartal (20 May), is that
the rent policies for the largest part are made by the State Government and not by the Federal State Berlin. “At the moment the City Administration is trying to reform the rent politics in some way”, says Kurt (18 May), but she adds right away that this is happening far too late; ‘the train has already left’. One of the instruments to stem the rents from increasing in particular areas of the city is the so-called ‘Milieuschutz’ (transl.: milieu protection) regulation, which aims to:

“[…] preserve the composition of the residential population in an area for particular urban development reasons and to counteract or prevent a social displacement” (Berlin.de).

In *Milieuschutz*-areas the conversion of rental properties into privately owned properties is supposedly subject to authorization and only permitted under certain conditions. Berlin-wide, there are around forty such areas at the moment, which are mainly located in the localities Kreuzberg, Friedrichshain, Prenzlauer Berg, Pankow, Wedding and Schöneberg (see *Plate 22*). Interestingly however, is that various City Locality Coordinators mentioned that whereas the concept of *Milieuschutz* looks so
positive and protective on the Berlin website, it does not always match with the situation on the ground. CLC Maike Janssen (13 June) among others, expresses her skepticism: “Ultimately it [the Milieuschutz] cannot stop this entire process, so the gentrification and the displacement will still remain […] the possibilities are limited”. This leads to pose the question whether the Milieuschutz regulation is not a mere façade of ‘doing good’, which in the end does not solve the b/ordering dynamics concerning rent politics from the roots up and is therefore rather a part of the mechanism that sustains them – an ‘imaginative apparatus’ at work?

5.3.3 The little but big problem of Subletting

Thirdly, it is left to be mentioned that this functioning mechanism of some of today’s b/ordering dynamics in Berlin, plays itself out also on a small scale. Thousands of private actors annually sublet their apartment or room in the ‘beloved centre’ to tourists or ‘expats’. According to CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) one has allowed this too much. “There are too many holiday apartments and too many Kreuzberger that sublet their living space”, she says. Besides, every tourist, student or expat who rents a room in a central location for only a little too much rent per month, contributes a little part to the bigger working mechanism of the current b/ordering dynamic. “One has to create awareness that also the individual actors who can afford the high rents can be part of the cause of displacement”, Kurt suggests.

To recapitulate; it became clear in this paragraph that the current policies and regulations concerning social housing, housing in general and rents, serve as working mechanism of the b/ordering dynamics that play themselves out in urban space Berlin today. The fact that both, housing companies and buildings themselves are to a large extend sold to external commercial players results in a ‘desocialisation of social housing’ and creates a shortage which fosters b/ordering dynamics between Berlin residents. The process of ever rising rents further reinforces this ‘spiral’ and even the small contributions made by private actors who sublet their room or apartment exacerbate the present b/ordering dynamics. As already mentioned in paragraph 4.6; what determines whether you belong to the one or to the other side of the b/ordering dynamic that these functioning mechanisms bring about, is your money. Those actors who have it, seem to win in the spectacle on the stage of urban space Berlin.

5.4 Prioritising and commodifying the beloved centre

Fourth, some b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin are created, facilitated and sustained through the functioning mechanism of commodifying the city centre of Berlin and simultaneously prioritising the city’s centre.

Firstly, as various City Locality Coordinators mention, the general priority in Berlin goes out to the centre and to those people who reside there. CLC Lars Schmitz (18 May) expresses himself
around this theme as follows: “Where is the priority? At those living in the centre […] the emphasis is placed on the centre and not on the areas which exist more in Berlin and which are so to say the ‘real’ Berlin”. When I asked him to elaborate he explained that because the concentration lies on the ‘great and colourful life in the centre’ all areas that do not belong to the central so-called scene-boroughs are often neglected and seldom known – even though they make up the largest surface of the city and they are thus, as he puts it ‘the rule’. This neglect is clearly visible when it comes to for example infrastructure and public transportation. Whereas in the centre, you can easily walk to the next metro station and will never have to wait longer than ten minutes for the next train, in the outer areas of the city you can find your selves not seldom waiting for a bus that arrives too late (field notes). “City development is mostly directed at the people who have a lot of money at their disposal, and those people live in the centre” explains CLC Maurer-Kartal (20 June).

Also when it comes to tourism, the centre is clearly ‘where it happens’ and therefore often the only area of Berlin that visitors get to see. The outer boroughs, which are the ‘real’ Berlin according to Schmitz, are left off the sight-seeing lists. This prioritisation however, has by far not only positive affects for those residents that actually reside in the scene-boroughs. Rather is part of the working mechanism that creates, facilitates and sustains a couple of the b/ordering dynamics that were described in chapter four. This will be illustrated with a few quotations from the field. As CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) explains:

“Kreuzberg has been hyped for the last ten years; it is a place were frequently new citizens and also investors come to. The face of the locality changes because of that. What distinguished Kreuzberg in terms of diversity and variety is becoming more and more a monoculture of one-sided businesses, such as, in the Oranienstraße for example - from a rich variety of shops it transformed into an amusement mile, ‘sauf und fraß Meile’ we now call it”.

Also CLC Christine Sworonska-Koch mentions (22 May) the struggle with the increased number of bars and restaurants in her locality:

“In the meantime, the Kiez rather belongs to the restaurateurs who make themselves very wide, even in the public space. Does it belong to the people who live and work here, or does he belong to those who come here as I-want-to-have-fun-here people?”

As derives from this quote, the increased number of bars and restaurants raises discussions around the ‘the nature of the usage of the Kiez’ and the question to whom it actually belongs. The arrival of new ‘one-sided’ shops, restaurants and bars brings certain conflicts, says Kurt (18 May): “For the old shop owners as well as for the long-established residents it is problematic, as they can no longer exist here”.

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44 German expression. Transl. would be something like: ‘booze and guzzle mile’
She hands me a leaflet on which the reader is asked for a signature to support a tailor shop which is threatened to be displaced from the ‘monosized’ Oraniensstraße. “These are the battles that are very current at the moment”, Kurt states.

Very current and problematic is also the way in which certain quarters of the central boroughs are commodified and hyped, often with instruments and rhetoric of city marketing. With the classical to-do lists ‘belonging to yesterday’, visitors are now increasingly going into the ‘cool’ Kiez. CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) explains that Neukölln became hyped as the Kiez where you can do whatever you want – ‘Here is Neukölln, here are no rules’. Also CLC Anette Maurer-Kartal tells me: “At some point we thought: ‘we are only a backdrop’, because there are even tourist tourbusses that drive through Schöneberg”.

Skowronska-Koch (22 May) explains how the advertising campaign of the business agency ‘seiBerlin’, or ‘beBerlin’, contributes to the tourism boom in the whole city. According to her, they advertise with things that are ‘really fatal’ for the Berlin residents. “This ‘365 days a year, seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day there is ‘Highlife and Halligalli’ and everything is possible” should not be possible in the residential areas, she says. “This marketing strategy is highly unfriendly to the local population”.

Hence, what this fourth paragraph shows is that hand in hand, the prioritisation and the commodification of Berlin’s ‘beloved centre’ are also part of the underlying working mechanisms that create, facilitate, sustain and also exacerbate current b/ordering dynamics that are present in urban space Berlin today. This mainly concerns the b/ordering dynamics between centre and periphery and between long-established Berlin residents and the various newly arrived actors on the centre of the city’s stage. “The constant coming and going creates a kind of border in itself” says Katharina Kühnel (23 May). In a sense, the centre turned into ‘the business card of the city’ and therefore, it needs to look vibrant and ‘hip’ for those who come to visit. To achieve this, it became priority number one, whereas various problems are simultaneously slowly shifting towards what Schmitz (18 May) names the ‘real’ Berlin; the areas surrounding it. As will be shown in the next paragraph, except the centre, there are also other areas that get attention. This attention however, is not of a ‘hip’ and vibrant nature.

5.5 Problematising the ‘lacking’ quarters

Fifth, and rather contrary to the fourth, there is the working mechanism of problematizing certain quarters in Berlin that are in some way ‘lacking’. Also this working mechanism contributes its part to create, facilitate and sustain the currently present in/visible b/ordering dynamics in Berlin. This ‘problematising’ is not only executed through the usage of the, often exaggerated, labels that certain neighbourhoods or streets (thing of for example Heerstraße Nord, Rigaer Straße or Hellersdorf) obtain from ‘the outside’. There are also few policy ‘instruments’ or ‘strategies’ at place that the city has designed to ‘deal with’ these ‘lacking’ areas in the city. For most of these policy instruments counts that they are commissioned from the Berlin Senate and that the employees often not come from or
have knowledge of the locality or Kiez in question. Three of these instruments will be discussed in this paragraph.

5.6.1 Quartiersmanagement – let’s reevaluate the Kiez!? 

The by far most often mentioned as well as most frequently used policy instrument is the so-called ‘Quartiersmanagement’ (QM) (transl.: ‘quarter management’). This instrument was initiated by the initiative ‘Soziale Stadt’ (transl.: ‘Social City’) of the Federal State Berlin in 1999. As is visible on Plate 23, most QMs are located in the boroughs Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg, Marzahn-Hellersdorf, Mitte, Neukölln and Spandau.

A QM office is meant to take care of the ‘preserving and strengthening of the social cohesion’ within the quarter it is placed, explains Victora Lopreno (7 June). According to the Berlin website:

“Quarter management is an instrument of urban revaluation and is used in particularly disadvantaged neighbourhoods where there is a concentration of poverty and unemployment or a high fluctuation of tenancy [...] It aims at improving the life situation on the ground and initiates sustainable and stabilizing development processes. The partners in this procedure are a committed residency, the local centres as well as the administrative
The reason for this quarter management is the since the nineties increased ‘polarisation in German cities’; “Whilst some quarters are becoming more popular and gain more attention through increasing tenancies, other quarters find themselves in a downtrend and are perceived as problem quarters within the cities” so it says in the introduction of the guideline document for the ‘implementation on site’ of the Federal Ministry for the Environment, Building and Reactor Safety (BMUB). The QM is there to meet the problems in these ‘disadvantaged’ localities.

At first site, the reason and the working strategy of the QM sounds very relevant, logical and promising. However, the interviews that were conducted with the City Locality Coordinators provide information of how the QM works on the ground, which is not in all cases as logical and promising as on the Berlin website and the guideline document.

Firstly, criticism is mentioned about the fact that the QM employees are often not people from the locality itself, so “there is little understanding of what the quarter actually is like” explains CLC Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June). And according to CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) “one should instead have strengthened the STZs, who already have the experience and know the Kiez”.

Furthermore, while the quarter ‘with all its challenges’ is supposed to be ‘viewed upon as a whole’ through the ‘integrated approach of the programme’ (BMUB), the City Locality Coordinators are critical of the “artificially drawn clear-cut borders” where the QMs operate in, as Kurt (18 May) puts it. Also CLC Claudia Schwarz (15 June) says that the QM in her Kiez is “geographically very limited, because it has a clearly drawn line on the map”. These clear-cut divisions make a collaboration challenging, explains CLC Maike Janssen (13 June), because “while the QM area is a part of the area we operate in as a STZ, our office is based outside of where they are allowed to work”. “That the framework is given, that’s problematic”, Kurt (18 May) concludes.

Another problem that results in the QM being part of the functioning mechanisms of present b/ordering dynamics in Berlin, is that “it has a different logic” as CLC Claudia Schwarz (15 June) explains. Although the QMs indeed contribute to the ‘stabilising of the quarter’ (BMUB), they do not focus enough on the residents that reside in it. It is more about determining investments in the quarter and the distribution of funds, than it is actually about the people’s lives and their wellbeing. Although the Quartiersrat is designed to bring all actors, including the residents of the quarter, to ‘participate’ and think about needed change, “[i]n the end the decisions are made by them [the QM]” says CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May). “It is not real participation but rather a kind of superficial participation because it looks chic […] The dissatisfaction increased”. Skowronska-Koch explains that while the Reuterkiez in locality Neukölln has indeed experienced a “fairly big revaluation” because the QM managed to install certain projects and market certain things, such as for example arts and the
art scene that already existed in Neukölln and still exists, “the artists themselves noticed very little of it”. And Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June) concluding points out that:

“Ultimately, it [the QM] is organised via city planning, and thus it is about economically revaluing the locality. In the STZ is not about that. Rather it is about giving people their lives in their own hands. Therefore, part of the displacement is because of the QMs, because of the revaluation”

What this shows is that a QM can thus even work counterproductically because of the economic perspective it operates from.

A last concern was shared regarding the sustainability of the QMs, which are, according to the Berlin website and to what the City Locality Coordinators have explained, only meant to stay in a quarter for a certain period of time. “Since there is simply quite a lot of money involved, and thus there are quite a lot of interests, it is not always sustainable, but often very short-lived”, CLC Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June) says. And also CLC Claudia Schwarz (15 June) expresses her concerns about what will happen once the QM leaves, whether it will have a staying impact.

At the same time, there are also City Locality Coordinators that spoke of the good collaboration they have with the QM in their locality. An example is the quarter Marzahn Nord, where the locality centre and the QM have the same holder: “We have a good and intensive collaboration relationship” explain Sabine Behrens from the locality centre and Victoria Lopreno from the QM whom I interviewed together (7 June). According to CLC Maike Janssen (13 June), it ultimately depends on the employees in the QM office, because “[i]n itself, it is not bad if you have several partners with which you can tackle topics”. CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) says that “[i]t might have quite well for a little while because many funds went into the Kiez. And this has certainly been positive because the Reuterkiez was long neglected”. CLC Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June) concludes that she finds it “a curse and blessing”.

5.6.2 Berlin Entwickelt Neue Nachbarschaften

The second policy instrument to be discussed here is the very recently launched programme BENN; Berlin Entwickelt Neue Nachbarschaften (transl.: Berlin Develops New Neighbourhoods). The launch of the program took place triumphantly in front of a newly constructed MUF in the QM area Nord Marzahn on the eastern edge of the city. The ‘lacking’ areas in this case, are defined on the basis of in what neighbourhoods of the city large refugee accommodations are located. At in total twenty different places, this so-called ‘integration management’ aims to “strengthen the community in the Kiez and thereby facilitate the participation of refugees in the societal life”.

Also for BENN, a nice map can be found on the city development website of Berlin. The programme will be mostly implemented in the peripheral localities, as these are the base of most of the recently constructed refugee accommodations. Considering the recent implementation of this
programme, there is little experience yet on how this will actually be implemented on the ground. But with the reality of the QMs in the back of the head, also these seemingly promising plans need to be looked upon critically. Also here it can be questioned why a completely new programme is lanced by the city while there are already so many actors involved in ‘the refugee question’ in Berlin (see paragraph 5.6) that know the situation and could execute this task. A programme such as BENN, implemented ‘from above’ and ‘from the outside’, might therefore result in creating, facilitating and sustaining complex collisions.

5.6.3 Mobile police stations - ‘There where Berlin is dangerous’

The third policy ‘instrument’ that the city has designed to ‘deal with’ ‘lacking’ areas in the city, which is part of the working mechanism of problematizing certain quarters and hence contributes its part to create, facilitate and sustain some of the current b/ordering dynamics in Berlin, is that of installing five ‘mobile police stations’. In this third policy, what the specific points in the city in which this instrument is implemented are ‘lacking’, at least from the city’s point of view, is safety.

Various areas in the city already belong to the so-called ‘dangerous places’ of the urban space, as explained by an article in the Berliner Zeitung45. In these areas, police officers are allowed to inspect people without a specific occasions. Now, as part of the new ‘security package’ of the Senate, five mobile police stations will be placed in ‘difficult’ quarters of the city, which are often quarters that have already a rather negative reputation. The implementation of this instruments, means for these quarters that the label they received ‘from the outside’ (see paragraph 4.4.2) will be even more confirmed. Again, this brings us to the example of the labelled-as-dangerous quarter Heerstraße Nord in the locality Staaken of borough Spandau. This ‘Sorgenkind’46 (transl.: problem child) is supposed to be one of the places where a mobile police station will be installed, but City Locality Coordinator Petra Sperling is doing her best to fight this. She explains:

"It is not as extreme as it is thought from the outside. It is not ‘Worlds End’ here, as we are sometimes represented in the press. This image remains however [...] If one compares the statistical data with the real experiences one has here then one simply sees it; ‘it is not true’”.

The following field notes that capture my first impression of the Kiez Heerstraße Nord confirm Sperling’s explanation above and show that whilst flâneuring through this supposedly ‘dangerous’ Kiez, it’s atmosphere actually seemed rather comfortable to me:

“Overall, apart from the grey buildings, the Kiez was rather green. People of multiple ages were walking on the pedestrian streets than run through the social housing blocks. Two

45 See article ‘Die 23 unsichersten Orte der Stadt Wo Berlin gefährlich ist’ on the website of the Berliner Zeitung: http://www.berliner-zeitung.de/23459052
46 See article ‘Sorgenkind Heerstraße’ on the website of the Berliner Abendblatt: http://www.abendblatt-berlin.de/2017/05/08/sorgenkind-heerstrasse/
women with strollers stood at a corner to exchange a word with one another, an old lady was enjoying the sun on a bench along one of the paths and children were playing with a ball on a little field” (field notes 14 June).

Hence, the installments of mobile police stations is part of the ‘imaginative apparatus’ of current b/ordering dynamics in Berlin, as it is likely to aggravate an already existing negative label that certain quarters of the city received ‘from the outside’ and struggle with. By using a certain rhetoric, it contributes to facilitate and sustain the centre-periphery divide and the prejudices and perceptions of the people living in these two areas.

In short; all three instruments do concern themselves with real existing and important problems in urban space Berlin. It is mostly the way in which they operate that makes part of them belong to the functioning mechanism of ‘problematising’ certain neighbourhoods that ‘lack’ something. This ‘way’ is often defined on the basis of a rather one-sided ‘top down’ perspective. A perspective which is in the case of the QMs simultaneously also economically orientated. In the designing of these instruments, there is not much room for their actual effect on the residents ‘on the ground’. Moreover, the work of all three instruments tends to happen in a ‘void’ instead of taking in the already existing rich and relevant knowledge of all experienced actors that operate in the subsequent areas and often know the locality or Kiez in question ‘by heart’.

5.6 Arrival architecture

The sixth working mechanism that came forward from a look behind the coulisses of Berlin’s stage, is the design of the present ‘arrival architecture’47. This mechanism creates, facilitates and sustains mainly the b/ordering dynamic between the long-established Berlin residents and the immigrants or refugees as the newly-moved (see paragraph 4.3.2). According to CLC Ira Freigang (1 June) “[t]he refugee issue is that what gives the most fears and borders in Berlin”. The ‘arrival architecture’ consists of a convergence of multiple aspects. It is coordinated by the ‘Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten’ (transl.: Berlin Office for Refugee Affairs) that has started to operate only since August 2016.

5.6.1 Many actors, many interests

The arrival of the large number of refugees on Berlin’s stage in the year 2015 overwhelmed the city in many senses. “Nearly 80,000 people found their way to Berlin, of which over 50,000 have been registered and taken in” (MIS, 2016). Most importantly for this discussion about the arrival architecture, is that this upheaval resulted in an incredible increase of the number of actors that concerned themselves with the situation: Citizen initiatives sprung up in nearly every borough of the

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47 This term is generally used, as for example in the name of the attended conference: ‘Destination Berlin: Strategies of Arrival Architecture’. 
city, volunteers took over tasks that the City Administration could not handle and many sport halls and other spaces with a large capacity were turned into emergency accommodations. An example is the defunct airport Berlin Tempelhof that became one of the biggest refugee centres in Germany and can host up to 7000 people. These large numbers of both, newly arrived refugees and local actors involved, resulted in a rather decentralized puzzle of which an overview was very hard to obtain.

Almost one year later, in 2016, the ‘Masterplan für Integration und Sicherheit’ (transl.: Masterplan for Integration and Security’) (MIS) was designed and put into operation by the Berlin Senate as a first step into the direction of organising the city’s arrival architecture more centrally. This ‘masterplan’ is supposed to create ‘successful integration’ by following a path that is marked by eight steps that define the central goals and measures for the next years. These steps read as follows:

1. Arrival, registration and granting of benefits of the fugitives
2. Health care
3. Accommodation and living space
4. Language and education offers
5. Integration into the labor market
6. Security
7. Integrative and open city society
8. Active participation of the fugitives in social and cultural life”

(Masterplan für Integration und Sicherheit, 2016: 7)

All of the above steps are indeed of great importance when the aim is to design an architecture of arrival in which everyone finds a place. However, in practice, this ‘masterplan’ consists mainly of the distribution of funds to associations, organisations and other actors that can show they concern themselves with one of these focal points. “These funds are allocated by the borough administrations to various actors in the borough” explains CLC Ira Freigang (1 June). This means that the actual execution of the plan differs by borough. Whereas the borough administration of Pankow allocates the funds mostly to the STZs, in other boroughs this money goes to for example QMs, private actors or other associations. In short; the arrival architecture still differs in all areas of the city and the number of actors involved has not decreased.

Furthermore, the ‘masterplan’ entails the immediate construction of so-called MUFs and Tempohomes as the next level of accommodation for refugees, because the sport halls in the centre have to be used for their original purpose again. MUF, short for ‘Modularen Unterkünften für Flüchtlinge’ (transl.: Modular Accommodations for Refugees), is a fenced community accommodation of six five-story ‘basic models’ with a total capacity of 450 people, where refugees are supposed to stay six to nine months until the recognition of their status\(^\text{48}\) (see Plate 24). These building types have

\(^{48}\) Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung und Umwelt

Katinka Schlette - Present Borders Border-Memoryland Berlin
Plate 24  Blueprint of a Modular Accommodation for Refugees
Source: Bauwelt

Plate 25  The triumphant opening of the first Tempohomes in Lichterfelde, Berlin
Source: Thilo Rückeis, 2016
been already heavily criticized for among others reviving the ‘Plattenbauten’ in the outskirts of the city, having calculated way to little square metres per resident and being very irresponsible in terms of solidity (Initiative bezahlbarer Wohnunsbau, 2016). There was no architect involved in designing the MUFs, however their supposed using period is 50 to 100 years, as the Senate has expressed the desire of an after use by for example students. Tempohomes, short for ‘temporary homes’ are container villages also designed by the Senate itself, but build for an existence of five years on the basis of the special building permit for refugee accommodation. Considering the number of still arriving refugees that receive their right to stay, various citizen initiatives fear that this short-life quality containers will silently turn into a permanent housing. The construction of both accommodation types is presented as an innovative and qualitative performance of the Senate. Sleek-looking PowerPoint-presentations for the presentation of every new MUF or Tempohomes can be accessed through the website of the Senate administration for urban development and the environment. The opening of the first MUF or Tempohomes in a locality, tends to become an event of ‘political smiles’, as for example was the case with the first Tempohome-complex in locality Lochtefeld of borough Steglitz-Zehlendorf, whose opening took place in a very ‘triumphantic manner’ 49 (see Plate 25), mentions CLC Mampel (8 June). When it is according to Claudia Langeheine, the director of the LAF, the building of Tempohomes and MUFs “improves both, the conditions for rapid integration and a close collaboration and networking of the state and non-state actors involved”50.

Apart from the rather problematic design of the accommodations, what furthermore complicates the situation is that the construction thereof is executed by an immense amount of different actors, because everyone can apply to become the ‘holder’ of one of the by the Senate commissioned accommodations. Among these actors are thus social housing companies, but also commercial real estate companies that have no experience in the field of migration. Because the latter often offers to do the job for less money, this is the type of holder which is more likely to be chosen for the job, which often leads to chaotic situations on the ground. Informant Janna Völpel (5 May) mentions the example of a newly constructed MUF on the edge of the city in Marzahn Nord. Here, residents moved in even before the construction was even finished, and given the holder was a company from Norway this set of circumstances led to rather inhuman conditions.

Another part of the ‘masterplan’ focuses on what has become a generally used term: ‘Willkommenskultur’ (transl. welcome culture). This ‘Willkommenskultur’ has been integrated into the focal points of every STZ and other association that is somehow concerned with the social structures of the Kiez. In the context of the ‘masterplan’, concerning yourself with this welcome culture means you can apply for certain funds, which makes the ‘institutionalisation of welcoming people’ a

50 See the letter of Langenheine on the website of Das Landesamt für Flüchtlingsangelegenheiten: https://www.berlin.de/laf/ueber-uns/
questionable issue. Whereas it is naturally very important to be concerned with this theme as a STZ or as another social actors in the field, and indeed, in most cases it seems to be executed very well, at the same time it is rather interesting that is has become a focal point on its own. Didn’t this welcoming and integration of people already have a long history in Berlin? Similar questions were raised by a few City Locality Coordinator working in those localities that have historically been always places of arrival, such as Kreuzberg and Neukölln. The expressed their opinion on how it is rather strange that all out of the sudden there are multiple conferences and meetings around this theme, addressing it like something completely new and without taking in the experience of those who might have already found valuable strategies to ‘welcome’ newly arrived people in the city; them.

Hence, the ‘masterplan’ that was meant to deal with the ‘refugee issue’ in Berlin centrally and supposedly improves the ‘conditions for rapid integration’ and a ‘close collaboration and networking of the state and non-state actors involved’ on the contrary seems to complicate the situation even more as the number of actors, part of them with economic and no social interests, increased even more and the already existing knowledge was left aside unused. There is too little thinking about the actual impacts, as Kurt (18 May) puts it:

“Too often today are beautiful concepts are created on the PC, which then do not function in practice. This is exactly the same with many blueprints: the new buildings are all the same, completely unreflected – the thinking is too one-sided and not so much about the context”.

5.6.2 Location: unwanted and cheap areas

A second way in which the current ‘arrival architecture’ functions as a working mechanism of the present b/ordering dynamics in the city concerns the geographical location of refugee accommodation. For most of the newly arrived, moving out of the often centrally located sport halls means moving into an accommodation that is located in one of the peripheral localities of the city, be it one in an already existing building, as is the case with the old cigarette factory in Hackenfelde, or a newly constructed MUF of Tempohome unit. One reason of this peripheral location is that the ‘beloved centre’ is already too full to accommodate such large numbers of people. The peripheral boroughs of the city are thus the only place were space remains. Another reason is, again, revolving around issues related to money. Would there be space in the centre, it would be too expensive to accommodate refugees in ‘for free’, whereas the space in the city’s margins is still rather affordable. Moreover, it is difficult to find house owners that rent their property for this usage, as the value of a building decreases when it is used for refugee housing, as informant Völpel (5 May) tells me.

This peripheral location does not only segregate the refugees in the sense that reaching the centre is difficult, but also by placing them in a context where their arrival is often regarded as ‘competition’ (see paragraph 4.3.2). Furthermore, the constructions of MUFs or Tempohomes, are often badly communicated with the local residents of the subsequent locality. This confluence of
circumstances does not stem the existing prejudices and perceptions in these localities, but rather creates, facilitates and sustains the current b/ordering dynamics.

5.6.3 Thinking too short term

“The LAF is supposed to react fast and efficient on fast changes”, Langeheine of the LAF goes on to write. ‘Fast’ is certainly a good word to describe how the current construction of MUFs and Tempohomes helps to move refugees out of the various sport halls in the city. If this ‘reaction’ is also ‘efficient’ on the long term however, is rather questionable. As aforementioned, constructions in Berlin are often executed fast, without standing still and thinking of their effect in praxis (see paragraph 5.2). This seems also to be the case with designing an appropriate arrival architecture. Its nature of short-term thinking, gives it a further aspect in which it functions as a working mechanism for current b/ordering dynamics in Berlin.

One way in this which short-term thinking is legitimised, is the usage of ‘emergency rhetoric, argues urban researcher René Kreichhaust on the conference named ‘Destination Berlin: Strategies of Arrival Architecture’ that was attended during the field work of this research project. “German political speakers think and talk in a different logic than was is needed on the ground” Kreichauf thinks. “They always refer to an ‘emergency situation’ being at place and that is therefore necessary to react fast” (e.g. the words of Langenheine at the beginning of this sub-paragraph). “This fast reaction is then framed as a success story and the people that get their accommodation should be thankful”. Kreichauf then poses the important question of when will be the end of this legitimisation by the so-called ‘emergency situation’. In the same line with the aforementioned fears of various citizen initiatives, Kreichauf warns that the current emergency constructions will become naturalized soon; that people will take their presence as for granted, that they will start to urbanise and that the fact that these ‘buildings’ were originally built so fast, so ugly and modest, because they were meant to be temporal. One explanation of this fast decision-making and acting is, according to Völpel, the pressure that politicians and urban planners are put under by needs and questions of the local residents. People expect a solution that will not have a negative effect on their own quality of life whatsoever.

On the long term however, the fast decisions of today will have a negative impact on the whole city, says architect Bastian Zivilgan, who is a speaker of the same conference. He says that Berlin was, is and will be a city of arrival, which means that rather than designing affordable ‘arrival architecture’ the Senate should think of long-term ‘living architecture’, or actually just ‘architecture’.

To briefly recapitulate; this paragraph demonstrated that through a convergence of multiple aspects, the current way in which the ‘arrival architecture’ is organised in Berlin, is a functioning mechanism that creates, facilitates and sustains mainly the b/ordering dynamic between the long-established Berlin residents and the immigrants or refugees as the newly-moved (see paragraph 4.3.2). Firstly, the ‘masterplan for integration and security’ increases the number of actors involved, part of which has
economic interests, and does not make use of the already existing knowledge in the field. Secondly, unpopular and cheap peripheral areas have been chosen as locations for the ‘next level of refugee accommodation’. And lastly, the fast decision making and acting does largely not take into account the consequences the arrival architecture will actually have in the localities on the ground.

5.7 Participation in decision-making structures

The seventh and last working mechanism that creates, facilitates and sustains present b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin is the actual extend in which Berlin residents of various levels participate in decision making structures in the city. This mechanism became visible clearly form the data assembled through the conducted interviews with the City Locality Coordinators.

As mentioned by various locality ‘experts’, the current trend is to increasingly include the term ‘participation’ into the formulated strategies or focal points of governmental units on various levels in the city’s decision making landscape. Two of these levels were particularly mentioned during the conducted interviews. Firstly, the participation of the STZs as intermediary actors in the decision making on the borough- and Senate level and secondly, the participation of local residents in the decision making on the locality- and city level. The important question, as Sabine Kanis puts reads: “What is the quality of the participation, the possibility of having a say?”

5.7.1 Participation of the STZs

Firstly, when it comes to the participation of the STZs on the borough- and Senate level, most of the CLCs say they are in good contact with both the borough administration and the QM in their locality in case there was one. This contact however, is often limited to financial issues. As the STZs are largely financed ‘from above’ they are restricted to certain regulations. “The biggest mess is that with our social work, we have to work off our asses and do projects, projects and projects. We have to apply for our money from all kinds of places and then always submit the accounting very precisely and specifically”, expresses CLC Sabine Kanis (30 May) herself with a little frustration.

To lesser extent thus, this contact means that they actually have a say in urban development issues regarding their locality. “The fact that the QM is the organizer of the locality conferences and is thus the first to ask about relevant topics, makes them rather the one to give impulses of where to go with the locality and defining what projects are needed at the moment”, explains Katharina Kühnel (23 May). Also CLC Elvira Smolaka (9 June) says: “We can say things. But decisions are usually made without us”. CLC Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) elaborates further: “If you, in certain rounds, loudly say what you thinks of certain topics, and if that is contrary to the smart things those Futzi’s from their desks have thought of, then there is sometimes a bit of crunch”. The goes further on to explain what the problem in her opinion is:
“There is always a lot of talk about participation. Since a few years it has become ‘the super important catchword’” tells Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) me and explains that they are expected to carry out their work in this participative way. “But by the administration we are not treated in this way, there is not participation there. You can only do this if you are treated by the subsequent departments so too”.

Likewise, CLC Sabine Kanis (30 May) shares her thoughts on the attitude of some actors of the ‘higher level’: “There is a contradiction between the negligence from above and the grins on TV when they have made a mistake that gnaws away all the tax money” (Sabine Kanis, 30 May).

Moreover, what is problematic with the ‘top down’ approach of the ‘above’ actors, is that their actions consist of more talking about what is needed, rather than actually talking with the people whom it concerns. “This is what we sometimes have to fight with” says Victoria Lopreno (9 May), “that our client is relatively far away from the practice”. And CLC Seemann (15 June) mentions the quarter meetings of the QM in her locality as an example where “only German people sit, but no people with a migration background that make up such a big part of Reinickendorf”. Also the previously mentioned conference on Berlin’s arrival architecture can serve as such an example. All speakers and attendees were interested in the topic and mostly probably wanted the best for the refugees that are newly arriving in their city, however there was not one refugee present as a speaker or in the audience, which created a lack of speaking with those people that the arrival structure mainly concerns.

5.7.2 Participation of the local residents

Secondly, when it comes to the participation of local residents in the decision making on the level of their own locality or of the city, it was mentioned that it is not clearly enough communicated towards the resident where exactly they can have a say in and where not (e.g. Kanis, 16 June). “It is a naïve notion of participation, to simply expect that the people will come and have a say”, CLC Sabine Kanis (16 June) states. And Thomas Potyka adds that when people have actually shared their opinion about for example a certain construction plan, often their influence is not realised and they get no feedback.

This links to the next problem which entails that many residents seem to have lost their trust in the ‘higher’ structures. “The people who have committed themselves have resigned because they have noticed there is not much change”, says CLC Katharina Kühnel (23 May) and explains that they look with increased sepsis at the QM as many of its projects are executed by companies that come from outside the Kiez. Besides there is also a large part of people “who feel left alone by politics” says Lopreno. According to CLC Seemann (16 June) “the lower classes play a too small role”. She asks; “who makes politics for ordinary people?” What is the challenge according to social worker Thomas Potyka (30 May) who is concerned with social space-orientated networking is:
“ [...] to continue with this participation in a way that people get more trust again. [...] It is not only important to ask people about their opinion, it is also important to stay in conversation with them. To be an ear that listens to the people that live here”.

Fortunately, there are some cases in which this ‘being of an ear’ works and decision-making structures seem to have developed in a good direction. In the borough Lichtenberg, for example, the by the borough administration developed concept of ‘Runde Tische’ (transl. round tables) seems to work quite well. It entails that before a large construction project, the investor, the architect and the residents can sit with the borough administration around one table and all share their opinion, explains CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May).

Moreover, there are many citizens initiatives that have took action by themselves and committed them to issues such as increasing rents or displacement. For example, they seek to obtain the Milieuschutz in their Kiez (e.g. in localities Neukölln, Kreuzberg and Lichtenberg Mitte). “More and more people want to have points of contact that went missing and then do something about this” says CLC Katharina Kühnel (23 May) and explains it would be good to link these initiative from ‘the ground’ with higher up levels. In Steglitz-Zehlendorf, this is already done through a likewise version of the ‘round tables’, here organised by citizens, as Mampel (8 June) explains: “[p]eople from the borough administration, politicians and city planning attend. Also the police, the residents and various citizen associations come. Then, various issues are discussed”.

In short; the ‘super important’ catchword ‘participation’, is not always as present on the ground as it is on paper in the strategies or focal points of governmental units on various levels in the city’s decision making landscape, which makes it a working mechanism that creates, facilitates and sustains present b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin. Whereas the STZs as ‘experts’ in their social field have great potential to be the actor that co-decides the direction of the locality, often their contact with the ‘higher levels’ is limited to financial issues which makes the participation “a kind of pseudo-participation” sometimes, as CLC Sabine Kanis (30 May) puts it. Citizens are losing trust in the effect that their participation has, and therefore often withdraw from decision-making settings after a while.

5.8 Recap

What this chapter showed is that there is not one sole working mechanism that causes the present b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin. Neither is there one sole working mechanism for each of the subsequent b/ordering dynamics that were discussed in the previous chapter. In Berlin, there are several important working mechanisms that underlie the various current b/ordering dynamics on the city’s stage. These mechanisms do not work independent from each other, but are much interwoven. Just as CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May) clearly puts it into words: “These are of course all correlations of several aspects that flow into each other and assist each other”.

The first working mechanism is the way in which is dealt with the divided past since the fall of
the wall in 1989. It created, facilitated and sustained the b/ordering dynamics between east and west as well as poor and rich that are present on Berlin’s stage today. Furthermore, the allowing of ever more investments and constructions in several parts, but mostly the centre, of the city and the way in which housing and rent politics are organised are both working mechanisms that feed b/ordering dynamics between centre and periphery, between long-established and newly arrived residents, between poor and rich by immensely increasing the number and the nature of actors on the stage of the city centre while displacing others. Then, there is the mechanism of prioritising and commodifying the city’s beloved centre, attracting an ever increasing number of mostly affluent people to the centre and thereby creating, facilitating and sustaining the b/ordering dynamic between the long-established Berlin residents and the newly, mostly prosperous arrived. The problematizing of areas that are ‘lacking’ in some way through the usage of particular instruments and rhetoric is a mechanism that creates and sustains or aggravates the b/ordering dynamic of prejudices about these areas. The sixth working mechanism is the design of the current ‘arrival architecture’ in the city, consisting of a convergence of multiple aspects that together create a complexity of actors and economic interests rather than working from the ground level and thereby sustain the b/ordering dynamic between long-established residents and refugees or immigrants as the newly arrived. Lastly, the actual extend in which Berlin residents of various levels can participate in making decisions about what happens in the boroughs, localities and Kieze of the city, creates, and facilitates b/ordering dynamics in the sense that it is not as present in praxis as on paper. This means that decision-making structures function often from above rather than from below, giving those people that actually want to work on b/ordering dynamics in their environment not an easy way to do so. Furthermore, in most of these working mechanisms of the present b/ordering dynamics money played a big role. Who has money, has the power to own space in the city and, there where the execution of certain instruments or constructions is outsourced, economic interests emerge. This does not create a context wherein the problematic and hierarchical consequences of the b/ordering dynamics that are currently present on the stage of urban space Berlin can be dealt with, but rather contributes to create, facilitate and sustain them.
6 | Creatively deconstructing borders in urban space

“[...] how hard it is sometimes to pass certain borders when there is no physical border to be seen”

(Sylvia Lopreno, 7 June)

Knowing that there are various b/ordering dynamics in present day Berlin and that they are created, facilitated and sustained by complex and overlapping functioning mechanisms, it is now time find out what dynamic and changing border context means for the what and the how of so-called ‘border art’. Not only because making this connection is new to the ‘politics-aesthetics nexus’ (see paragraph 1.3 of this thesis) but also to slowly shift the focus of this thesis towards possible solutions rather than solely discussing the problems and their reasons.

This chapter seeks to find answers to the question of which creative practices contribute to deconstruct and shed light on the often invisible borders and their working mechanisms (sub-question III.) as well as to the question of how these creative practices are doing this (sub-question IV.). The information that forms the core of this chapter is assembled through the qualitative interviews with the ‘creatives’, the participation in creative projects and the last part of the expert interviews. The attended alternative city walks, exhibitions, and discussions concerning these questions complement this primary information to enable the discussion to present rich findings from various viewpoints.

During the fieldwork of this research project in urban space Berlin, various kinds and locations of creative practices that contribute to deconstruct or shed light on various borders in the urban space (sub-question III.) have been found. With the bordering dynamics often not materially present or hidden by their imaginative apparatus, this contribution to border deconstruction is not always explicitly expressed by the creators of these creative practices. In order to provide a full impression of the diversity of their nature the various practices will come forward in this chapter as examples, whilst the varying ways in which they implicitly or explicitly contribute to deconstruct and shed light on the previously discussed bordering dynamics and their working mechanisms (sub-question IV.) will serve as the structure guiding through it. These ways of ‘creatively deconstructing’ differ in terms of place, time, aim, effort and much more. Here, the overarching manners that derived from the fieldwork of this research projects are discussed.

6.1 Creatively informing

The first way in which creative practices can contribute to deconstruct and shed light on the b/ordering dynamics in Berlin is when these practices are used to creatively present information or explain something to the public. This ‘creatively informing’ takes place in various places in the public urban space, as well as in spaces inside. The to-be-explained information is often presented in form of an exhibition. This ‘creatively informing’ as one way to contribute to border deconstruction is often
carried out is in museums or specific exhibitions that use creative means to inform the audience about a certain theme.

6.1.1 Accessibility

The creative way in which the information is presented helps to make this information more accessible to a larger public; a ‘creative’ exhibition is more likely to draw the attention of, and subsequently teach a diverse audience than an exhibition consisting solely of white plates with black text. One example of such a ‘creative’ way of sharing information is the Jugend[widerstand]museum in locality Friedrichshain, which was visited during the fieldwork period. Based in the Galiläa Church, a place of ‘resistance and asylum’ for youth exposed to repression during GDR times, the usage of photos, artworks, objects, music, posters and stories from the past, informs the audience about the story of youth resistance in the former east in an accessible way. Informing about the bordering mechanisms of rent politics and housing, also the exhibition ‘Geschichte wird gemacht!’ in the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Museum is an example of ‘creatively informing’ as a way to contribute to deconstruct and shed light on borders. Here, the ‘impressive’ changes in Kreuzberg of the past two decades are addressed. With a tinkered miniature version of the locality, a large number of drawers with archives, diaries, film and audio fragments, photos and objects to look into, various photos of the locality then and now and a documentary playing in one corner, this exhibitions, in an accessible and lively way, make the audience aware of the fact that the appreciation of the reconstruction, demolition of old buildings and urban renewal is ‘a question of perspective’.

6.1.2 Graspability

Furthermore, ‘creatively informing’ is a creative practice that contributes to deconstruct and shed light on borders as it can make the discussed themes more graspable for the audience. For example, through involving the audience by making an exhibition interactive. This is the case in the exhibition project named ‘Ferngespräche’\(^{51}\), which was visited during the fieldwork of this research project (20 May). Here, the perspectives of Berlin residents on the city are displayed across the entire room in the form of a map of Berlin. Equipped with an audio device, visitors move from place to place on the Berlin map and learn about the city’s history – “a history of migration, multi-voiced and multi-faceted” through listing to ‘oral history’; diverse place-bounded stories. Another manner in which the information can be more graspable is by using the creative means in such a way that the audience feels as if they themselves actually are in the situation or time that the information is about. An example thereof, is the aforementioned panorama of artist Yadegar Asisi which ‘creatively informs’ the audience about how life in close proximity to the wall in West Berlin has been. Also the Berlin Wall Trail is, in a sense, a way of ‘creatively informing’ people by bringing them back into a situation to

\(^{51}\) See website Ferngespräche: http://projekt-ferngespraech.de/
some extent.

Using creative means to explain something to the public can make the to-be-explained often more accessible and more graspable to the public and therefore contributes to deconstruct and shed light on certain b/ordering dynamics and their mechanisms in an informative way.

6.2 Creatively discussing specific phenomena

“To get people that pass by out of their daily routines for at least one little moment”

(Marta Lodola, 7 May).

Secondly, many creative practices contribute to deconstruct or shed light on bordering dynamics and their mechanisms through focusing on a specific, often injustice, situation or phenomenon in society. Through these creative practices, the public is reminded, informed or set to (re)think about a specific, situation. As Marta Lodola puts it above; they are pulled out of their daily routines for at least one little moment. This second manner of deconstructing or shed light on b/ordering dynamics seemed too often coincide with the explicit aim that the creator would mention for his or her work.

6.1.1 Still works in the public space

The most constantly present and visible creative practices of this second manner are those located in public places in the urban space, often in the form of murals, graffiti, installations, sculptures and tags. The most famous one is certainly the frequently visited ‘East Side Gallery’, consisting of murals painted on the longest maintained section of former wall, on the eastern side of the Spree in the locality Friedrichshain of the borough Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg. In 1990, 118 artists from twenty-one countries painted a part of the ‘gallery’, an act which would have been only allowed in West Berlin up until then and which ‘gave expression to the widely felt joy at the falling of the Berlin Wall’ (see Plate 26).

Concerned with the former border are also various other artworks in public space that were found whilst conducting the ethnographic flâneries, along the Berlin Wall Trail. An example of these is a statue made by Stephan Belkenhol named ‘Balancing Act’ (see Plate 27). It depicts a character balancing on one foot on a piece of the former wall in front of the Axel Springer Building in Berlin Mitte, which used to be a lighthouse of the free West. Behind the sculpture a few other pieces of the former wall rose up in the air. Another example such creative practices is art the installation ‘White Crosses’, located on the shore of the Spree, right next to the Reichstag in Berlin Mitte also. On each of the crosses a name is written of a person that died because of the Wall, the installation serves as a form of ‘commemoration and showing of respect’.

The wall itself however, serves also as a canvas for other creative practices in public space that deconstruct and shed light on borders, sometimes close- and sometimes faraway.
Plate 26 ‘Es geschah im November’ by Kanu Alavi, East Side Gallery, Berlin
Source: http://www.eastsidegallery-berlin.de/

Plate 27 ‘Balancing Act’ by Stephan Belkenhol
Source: Schlette, 2017
Not long ago, the open-air exhibition ‘War on Wall’\(^{52}\) of the photographer Kai Wiedenhöfer was to be viewed on the back side of the East Side Gallery wall, also called the ‘West Side Gallery’ (see Plate 28). Through the use of photographs as large as the wall itself the theme ‘war in Syria’ was ‘creatively discussed’ and thereby deconstructed and shed light on borders in people’s minds and perceptions, as well as of contemporary geopolitics.

Currently, the installation ‘Beyond the Wall – jenseits der Mauer’ is shown on the more than 200 metres long West Side Gallery (see Plate 29). It consists of shots from film footage documenting everyday life in the GRD border area, that artist Stefan Roloff has shot in 1984 from the western side in eastern direction. These are altered with shots and quotes of video portraits Roloff made with time witnesses. This installation ‘creatively discusses’ not so much a historical reality of the former GDR, but rather “what it means to build a wall, to separate people from one another and to incite them against each other and to lock them” (Roloff, interview rbb\(^{53}\)). It thereby contributes to the deconstruction and shedding light on the problematic effects of borders in urban space Berlin and in general.

Furthermore, throughout the urban space, and endless amount of commissioned and uncommissioned creative works in the form of mostly murals, but also photographs, posters, statues, installations, can be found. Some of them are ‘creatively discussing’ phenomena related to the b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms in their city and thereby contributing to deconstruct and shed light on these. Murals are mainly located in the urban space’s central localities such as Kreuzberg, Neukölln, Friedrichshain, Mitte and Wedding. Directly or indirectly they ‘creatively discuss’ b/ordering dynamics through images and texts. In some cases, the ‘creatively discussing’ tends towards becoming a ‘creatively protesting against’. Besides, various kinds of art installations and sculptures in all boroughs and localities.

“Public art is important as it can stop people for a little moment to think. It can confront them with certain issues” said Katja Aßmann (10 June), curator and director of the Centre of Art and Public Space during the interview, in same line with the words of Marta Lodola at the beginning of this paragraph. Therefore, it belongs to the creative practices that contribute to the deconstruction and illumination of borders and their mechanisms through ‘creatively discussing’ specific phenomena.

\(^{52}\) See website War on Wall: ‘http://www.waronwall.org/

\(^{53}\) See website rbb: https://www.rbb-online.de/kultur/beitrag/2017/08/beyond-the-wall-jenseits-der-mauer-west-side-gallery-kunst-installation.html
Plate 28  "War on Wall" by Kai Wiedenhöfer  
Source: http://www.waronwall.org/in-pictures/

Plate 29  Stefan Roloff creating his work ‘Beyond the Wall- jenseits der Mauer’  
Source: http://www.bz-berlin.de/media/tomas-kittan-34
6.1.2 Live performances and actions

Secondly, a little less constantly present but often also positioned in public spaces, there are creative practices that deconstruct or shed light on b/ordering dynamics and working mechanisms through ‘creatively discussing’ specific phenomena in the form of performances and actions.

The works of ‘sound, video and media artist’ Georg Klein who I interviewed, illustrate this way of ‘creative border deconstructing’ very well. He works with audio and video material to make his installations in the public urban space which often have a performative and interactive part and are location-specific. “I go into the public space and develop an art project for particular situations that usually only really function in one place” (Georg Klein, 8 June). This situation is often a physical border or another border situation located in the middle of the city instead of the on the state border. Here, I will introduce two out of his many projects, which are also bundled in the thematic catalogue titled *borderlines* (2015), to show how they contribute to deconstruct and shed light on borders through ‘creatively discussing’ them.

The first project is called ‘Der Wachturm’ (transl.: the watchtower). It was created in the former watchtower in the Park ‘Schlesischer Busch’ positioned along the former inner German border where it was, as obvious, used to watch the border strip between east and west. Klein’s project consisted of the founding of the fictive organisation named ‘New European Borderwatch’ consisting of a website\(^{54}\), a media campaign and, physically, a registration centre in the former watchtower. Passersby were invited into the tower and encouraged to inscribe themselves so they could ‘watch their own European border, because Europe itself is struggling to do so’. This creates the moment in which they are led into an interesting conflict to which they must conduct themselves. “It is provocative and the people are totally confused because they do not understand the situation. That is what I find the most productive”. Both, people from left and right were disturbed by the project as it was not declared as art beforehand. Something extremely important because “when I do not say it is art, but it is life (here one sees the border between art and reality, because art is often seen as ‘outside of the reality context’) it occupies the people’s minds very strongly” (Georg Klein). Once the visitors found out the organisation was not real, they tried to start the discussion. “In principle, I have brought the EU’s external border to the inside again”.

The second project, named ‘Ramallah Tours’ consisted of the fictive offer to the residents of an Israeli city to visit the city Ramallah in Palestine located just on the other side of the border, which is, naturally, forbidden. In order for many people to see it and start thinking “[t]he tour bus was parked in the inner city. An internet address was to be seen on it and it made some strange noises” (Georg Klein, 8 June).

Klein describes the essence of his projects as follows:

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\(^{54}\) See website of fictive organization New European Borderwatch: [http://europeanborderwatch.org/](http://europeanborderwatch.org/)
“For me, my projects are not about overcoming borders, but rather about standing on the border and looking at both sides. To be neither on the one side nor on the other in this ambivalent situation and withstand that [...] To be in an interstice in which it may not be clear to which side it goes [...] That is actually what interests me in the border situation” (Georg Klein, 8 June).

Rather than abolishing borders, through creative practices, he wants to make people more sensitive to borders. For him it is not about making a clear political statement or protest.

Another way of deconstruction borders through ‘creatively discussing’ them is in form of organising actions as creative practices. An example is the action ‘Schöne Grüße aus Heerstraße Nord’ (transl.: Lovely greetings from Heerstraße Nord), mentioned by CLC Petra Sperling (14 June) during the interview. They let a lot of balloons in the air with cards attached to them all at once, in order to work on the image of their Kiez and show that “Platten are not as bad”. Through this action, which was well received by the citizens, they ‘creatively discussed’ that they “[...] do not want to be stigmatised!”

Furthermore, there are likewise actions that a component of a dialogue to the ‘creative discussion’ of the bordering phenomenon in question. This was the case with an action in locality Pankow, where various residents attached copies of the faces of drawn body-size family portraits (that were created by artist Valentina Satori and refugees in a nearby emergency accommodation) along a lively street with a colourful tape. Passersby were allowed detach a face and then could read what was written on the backside: “Hello, my name is Ismarailla, thank you for having me”. “The idea was that people would start to ask us questions and that from there, one comes into conversation. To have art as the starting point of communication” explains CLC Ira Freigang (1 June). Also other City Locality Coordinators expressed the contribution that creative practices with a discursive component can make when it comes to dealing with the various present b/ordering mechanisms in their locality. Is good “when art stimulates discussion” says Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June), this discussion being the most important part of creative practice, she explains. “By working with certain visual means, one can question certain phenomena and talk and think about certain topics”, thinks also Claudia Schwarz, 14 June).

The above shows that performances and actions, are also creative practices that though ‘creatively discussing’ b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms, contribute to deconstruct and illuminate them. Some of these performances and actions actively engage the audience by putting them in a particular position or fostering discussion or debate.

6.1.3 Investigation as part of creation

Thirdly, there are creative practices that contribute to the deconstruction and the shedding light on b/ordering dynamics and their imaginative apparatus by creatively investigating as part essential part
of their work. Before creating this work they are actually moving between and across the borders present in the urban space.

The artist duo Birgit auf der Lauer & Caspar Pauli create installations, performances, publications and videos. Before however, they spend hours or days of their time to converse with people about their history, their beliefs, their personal upheavals and journeys, to roam around and to search archives in other cities, other countries or just a few metres down the street. The investigation and being at site previous to the creation and presentation of their works, makes their way of working very slow but in-depth, they explain (18 June). Something that is never fully visible in the end-result but very important.

Currently, they are working on a project named ‘Clio’ for which they will create an exhibition and a performance around bronze sculptures located on the Museuminsel in the heart of Berlin, together with Berlin residents from various cultural backgrounds. After creating them new gowns, they will collectively dress them as some sort of ritual in order to “actualise the identity of the sculptures” (Birgit auf der Lauer, 18 June). The question surrounding the project is: what and where is ‘the Berlin centre’ really? Geographically speaking it is the Museuminsel. This place however, does not reflect the daily reality of the majority of Berlin’s diverse residents.

In another project related to the border theme, they focused on the stories of human traffickers in Turkey. For the previous investigation they travelled off to the European external border to meet and speak to them by themselves, rather than blindly trusting the mainstream discourse. These stories they then brought from the margins of Europe back to its centre, where they decided to investigate the smuggling practices ‘next door’ in former West Berlin by looking through city archives. The stories of both of these places they then shared through their artwork.

With these works they aim to shed light on and speak about important societal themes that border people away from each other. Through their artwork they figure as the storyteller of far-away or hidden stories that are often unknown but in close proximity to us (18 June). Or, as Caspar put it: “We are the speakers”. Thereby, they complement the mainstream discourse of which personal stories and experiences are often not a part. This creative practice thus contributes to deconstruct and shed light on borders by ‘creatively discussing’ specific situations in their artworks on the basis of the stories they have encountered during their investigations.

In a similar way, the ‘Klub der Raumforscher’ are concerned with the urban space and move across and between its borders for a certain period previous to put their findings into creative creations, mentions Maike Janssen during an interview. “The movement in public space to consciously search for, look at and understand where the borders are, where one neighbourhood end and another begins” can be used “[…] to think of ways to deal with certain borders, of ways to build a bridge. A physical bridge, or maybe a non-physical bridge” (Maike Janssen, 13 June). According to her, this could deconstruct borders on various levels; between generations, between different cultures.

Visual artist and performer Marta Lodola from Italy contributes to deconstruct and shed light
on contemporary b/ordering dynamics through ‘creatively discussing’ them in all three above manners; she works as she calls it ‘into the urban space’, her work consists of performances and thirdly, she combines many of her projects with previous research. In her works, she tries to mix daily life with artistic practice and use her art as “tool to understand reality and the context” (Marta Lodola, 14 June).

With her current long-term project named ‘Actions Against Borders’, she wants to ‘break the border open’ and search for the various meanings borders can have for people in our contemporary time. The project consists of two different phases. In the first phase, she walks around four hours a day in the same borough for fourteen days and asks passersby what borders mean to them, if they experience any effects of borders in their lives and how one should deal with them. These answers are recorded. During the walks in the first borough, Neukölln, and its localities Britz, Buckow, Gropiusstadt, Neukölln and Rudow, we collaborated regularly by walking through the urban space and stopping people together and adding a specific question on contemporary borders in Berlin. This lets people that have never specifically thought about borders think about them and makes them aware of their existence (Marta Lodola, 14 June) which is “general but very important in a society that creates so many borders”. Going into the street is a ‘powerful move’ she says, as you reach them directly and you speak to many people who are then sharing this experience with other people they know, even if they react negatively. In the second phase, she takes the recorded answers from the street to an inside exhibition where they will to be heard as some sort of mantras. In a dark room bedside, she will be passive, rather than active like in the first phase, by standing there nude, giving the audience the option to shed light on her with little red laser pointers that can meet on her body and thereby letting them and herself crossing personal borders.

Through this project she wants to “collect and capture people’s personal experiences with borders, to let them speak about what is important to them, to reveal what people are really thinking”. This makes it possible for people to listen to “the thoughts of people whom they have never met”. People are not only the spectator but also the participator, during both phases of the project. In general she seeks to connect people with her art: “I want to use art to start a conversation about social issues and to get people thinking” (conversation during fieldwork, 12 may). She hopes to “create an effect into society” by creating what she calls a ‘domino effect’.

What these example show is that including a phase of investigation into the course of creative practices provides creative works that stand close to every-day life and bring stories and opinions to the surface that would otherwise remain generally unknown. Thereby ‘investigation as part of creation’ is a valuable way in which b/ordering dynamics can their mechanisms are deconstructed and illuminated through ‘creative discussion’.
6.1.4 Exhibitions of specific phenomena

Fourthly, of course, artworks and exhibitions ‘creatively discussing’ specific phenomena related to b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms, in various inside spaces belong to the creative practices that contribute to their deconstruction and illumination.

‘Multidisciplinary artist, curator and art and design theorist’ Lisa Glauer, whom I interviewed, works a lot with the border concept. Currently, she does so in form of a project which is part of the exhibition ‘Tunnel below/Skyjacking above: deconstructing the border’. This exhibition “addresses the immediate impact of border regimes today” through revealing narratives that are usually excluded. Glauer herself focusses on the USA-Mexican border region. She works with the rather unconventional painting material human milk, which “not necessarily wants to be painted” as she explains. This ‘invisible ink’, as she calls it, only becomes visible after ironing it. By using human milk she does not only positions herself in the corner of ‘abject art’ which explores themes that transgress and threaten our sense of cleanness of particularly the body and its functions, but discusses the environmental context: “[E]nvironmental abuse has inscribed itself into human milk in concentrated form. In the border region San Diego/Tijuana, the effects of the increasingly impermeable border on the environment and consequently, human milk produced here is analysed by medical institutions”.

With her project Glauer wants to sheds light on the fact that the clear-cut and human made border, between the supposedly ‘clean and healthy’ Santiago on the American side and the supposedly ‘unclean’ Tijuana on the Mexican side, is not able to stop natural environmental processes from crossing it. “Water for example can cross the border via soil, which affects the human bodies and therefor also the human milk”. She wants to deconstruct the border and to show ‘what is going through’. Furthermore, she addresses the ‘hypocrisy of not wanting to make your own fingers dirty but exporting weapons instead’ with the objects she decides to paint with the human milk. Namely; HK36 warships and weapons that Germany exports. With this ‘though’ contrast, as she calls it, she wants to trigger emotional reactions and ‘to show some of the damages that the border causes’.

The exhibition ‘Public Affairs - moving images from urban body experiences’ is a further example of how an exhibition focusing on specific b/ordering dynamics can contribute to deconstruct and shed light on these dynamics by ‘creatively discussing’ them. The b/ordering dynamics in question here are those between new and old city dwellers, between the rich and the poor and between machines and humans. It is an attempt to initiate “the (im)possible dialogue” between those people with five short video works that repeatedly play in different corners in the room. These are made by six artists from very differing cultural circles and reflect the cultural diversity of the locality Kreuzberg and its urban space. Through these videos the diversity but also the struggles and b/ordering dynamics between the diverse residents of the locality are illuminated.
Finally, various centres concerned with specific themes are a way deconstructing and illuminating b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms through ‘creative discussion’ by functioning as a space and a platform for creators, creative practices and audiences.

The Centre of Art and Public Space, located in Schloss Biesdorf in borough Lichtenberg in the former eastern part of Berlin, aims to explore “the complex interplay between art, architecture and public space”. Positioned on the crossroad of urban development and artistic productivity, it questions: how art changes the public space and our perception of it. In the changing exhibitions international contemporary art is displayed alongside art from the former GDR. Bringing together artistic positions of these different eras and contexts reveals unexpected associations and creates interesting situations, says Katja Aβmann, curator and director of the centre, during the interview (10 June). Before the interview, Aβmann gave me a tour of the current exhibition ‘Between Spaces’ that in which a diverse collection of artistic positions on urbanism and public space that ‘question, deconstruct and break down spatial demarcation’ in various ways are shown. It is guided by the questions of how political and economic interests shape the urban environment, which boundaries and power structures are encoded in it and which creative media can be used to make them visible and overcome them – which are very interesting for this research project.

In addition to contribute to the deconstruction of borders by leaving the stage to a rich variety of artists, the centre contributes to deconstructs yet another border by attracting visitors from both the former west and the former east of the city, “two audiences of which the older generations often have a different perception of what art is about and to some extend have prejudices when it comes to art from ‘the other side” Aβmann explains. In this way the audience is “encouraged to ‘look’ outside of the box and encounter new things”. For some citizens of the former GDR is a pleasant new discovery, whereas others feel offended because “their familiar art is hanging next to such ‘modern rubbish’” (Aβmann, 10 June).

A centre concerned with likewise themes is the Centre of Art and Urbanistics initiated by the artist collective and non-private organisation KUNSTrePUBLIK e.V. located in Pankow. It sees itself as “a laboratory for inter- and transdisciplinary activities centred on the phenomenon of ‘the city’”\(^{55}\) and aims to bring together artistic production and urban research. Throughout the month various talks, presentations, performances, installations and discussions are organised. During the fieldwork of the third discussion of the series named ‘Art as/is Social’ which seemed interesting for this research project was attended.

Also the Organ of Critical Arts in the locality Gesundbrunnen functions as an atelier, an experimental- and exhibition space and a mediating platform for dialogue which offers a place for a diverse range of art works in the frame of an ‘expanded art term’, referring to Beuys also. Its aim is to

\(^{55}\) See website ZK/U
provide “a basic structure for artists and locals for an open network of topic-specific activities”\textsuperscript{56}, something a did together with visual artist and performer Marta Lodola, whom I met through Pablo Hermann, the initiator of the Organ of Critical Arts. At the OKK emphasis is placed on socio-critical art culture and art is seen as the “plow for the treatment of the socio-political field in the sense of a civil, autonomous society, against reactionary tendencies such as racism, militarism, sexism, dogmata and fascism, and all their inhuman forms of expression”.

Hence, in a sense, these centres concerned with specific themes, are a form of creative practice that though ‘creatively discussing’ b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms, contribute to deconstruct and illuminate them. All in their slightly different and individual way, they do so by provided space and functioning as a platform to illuminate the specific b/ordering dynamics they are concerned with. ‘Creatively discussing’ thus, as one manner in which creative practices can contribute to deconstruct and shed light on b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms, sets the audience to (re)think the specific b/ordering phenomenon in question, by using creative practices in form of still works in the public space, live performances and actions, investigation and creation and specific creative centres.

During the conducted expert interviews with the City Locality Coordinator that daily work with b/ordering dynamics, most of them confirmed this way in which art can contribute to ‘border deconstruction’. With art you can draw “a different kind of attention to certain topics […] it perhaps can illuminate things differently” said Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) when I asked her to share her thoughts on if and how art could contribute to the dealing with the b/ordering dynamics in her locality that she just had mentioned. Sabrina Hermann (22 May) adjusted to that by saying one can “[…] represent things or situations exaggerated and put a finger on them” with art. According to Katharina Kühnel (23 May) “[a]rtistic projects, especially in the public space […] introduce yet another perspective, another look. That people stand still and ask themselves ‘what is this?’ and then realise that it is not so strange to them as they thought before”. Also Claudia Schwarz (15 June) is positive about creative interventions in the public space, as these can “bring certain issues out in the open”. They generally seemed to agree that art contributes “to question the own point of view” (Katharina Kühnel, 23 May).

6.3 Creatively gaining access

Thirdly, creative practices contribute to deconstruct and shed light on b/ordering dynamics and their mechanisms by functioning as the means to overcome an access point that otherwise closed.

Peng! Collective, ‘an explosive concoction of activism, hacking and art battling the barbarism of our time’, as they name it on their website, is a clear example of how art can function as means to overcome an otherwise closed access point. In their case, this closed access point is that of the legal

\textsuperscript{56} See website OKK
borders of activism. They make use of the principle of artistic freedom to displace the legal borders of activism. “It is always that question”, Alice Romoli from Peng! Collective tells me during the interview; “what is art?” None of them would call themselves an artist, she explains, “[b]ut today, when you use visual media such as film with an idea and a message, soon you will be thought of as one. Throughout time this has transformed from a description from the outside to a self-description, for we have not begun and said ‘we make art’” (Alice Romoli, 16 June). Peng! Collective wants to create funny and new forms of action through using various media, which became defined as ‘art activism’ by people from the outside. “Art is a burning barricade behind which we hide to get less legal problems, is what we always say” says Romoli smiling. “Who makes art, has of course the artistic freedom and therewith one can test the legal border. For us, this border crossing is functional for a certain form of spectacle”.

In addition to the legal borders that Peng! stretches through creative practice, which these practices they also seek to stretch the ‘border of the public opinion’ concerning societal issues, as for example was the case with a fictive ‘Help to escape campaign’. With this campaign the added the term ‘escape helper’ to the dominant discourse around the description of people that help others to cross border, which in which the terms ‘human smuggling’ and ‘human trafficking’ were the mainstream to draw attention to the fact that not all people that help refugees are automatically ‘bad guys’ that capitalise on dealing with humans. In this campaign, they designed a fictive ‘escape helper’ starters kit for European citizens to take along refugees over the border on their way back home from vacation and encouraged people to do so in a video. Similar to Georg Klein’s Wachturm project, they work on the border between reality and fiction by using the so-called ‘fake’ and therewith aim to move something in people’s heads.

The spectacle belongs to what is most important for Peng!; that their actions have an effect, that they have a political message, that they reach a large crowd and at best, that they can accomplish to change something or draw attention to societal problems by opening up a debate with a large ‘media echo’. Also the Centre for Political beauty handle this strategy of using art as a means to create spectacle and stretch the border of the legal system in order to draw attention to societal injustices; “art must hurt, provoke and rise in revolt” is as they put it themselves, or in short “aggressive humanism”. Often they do so by connecting the current refugee debate with Berlin’s bordered past. To illustrate; they removed the aforementioned art installation ‘white crosses’ from its place in Berlin, just before the festivities for the fall of the Berlin Wall’s 25th anniversary, and brought it to the European Union External border, which since the fall of the iron curtain has taken 30.000 lives – an action they named ‘The First Fall of the European Wall’. For both of these creative actors counts; the art itself is not their goal.

Another access point that art can help to open up caught my eye during my collaboration with Marta Lodola. Most passersby that we stopped and spoke to on the streets of the various localities in borough Neukölln initially responded quite sceptically. Once they realised that it was about an art
project, most of them were willing to answer our questions. Maybe because people tend to take art less seriously as they tend to think that ‘in art you are allowed to do everything’, as Georg Klein mentioned (8 June).

In short, these examples show that another way in which art can contribute to deconstruct bordering dynamics is using art’s (legal) place in society to gain a certain access.

6.4 Creatively facilitating encounters

“I can imagine that art can be a bridge. A bridge between different groups of the population”

(Lars Schmitz)

The fourth and last way in which creative practices can contribute to deconstruct and shed light on the b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms is the way wherein some creative practices ‘facilitate encounters’. Albeit the encounter and discussion between people also came forward as being partly the aim of some of the previously discussed creative practices, in these creative practices, the encounters are facilitated during the process of actually creating together, which is more relevant to them than the end product itself.

6.5.1 Collective creative projects

A rich variety of creative projects in Berlin contributes implicitly or explicitly to the deconstruction and shedding light on b/ordering mechanisms through using creative practices as a means ‘to let people meet each other’. During the fieldwork of this research project I had the chance to contribute and participate in two of these kinds of collective creative projects once or more times per week. Also these collective creative projects exists in a large and diverse range.

One of these projects was the inspiring project-platform KUNSTASYL e.V. that aims to explore how, through the catalyst of artistic work, existing structures can be changed. It revolves around the question of how living, rather than ‘accommodating’, can be created with active participation of the people that were forced to flee so they can contribute to shape the social space that is their new environment. And what concepts and strategies can be developed to transform provisional arrival into integrated residence?

“To plan, they have to know the people” told project initiator Barbara Caveng me (field notes, 10 May), referring to the current design of the cities arrival architecture. She believes “[s]tarting from the imagined space, not the real space” is of great importance (ibid.). My first encounter with their work was the visit of the exhibition named ‘DaHeim: Glances into Fugitive Lives’ in the Museum Europäischer Kulturen. This exhibition was design in a workshop-like process during 4 months in the museum itself by people coming from Albania, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Kosovo, Pakistan and Syria, all having in common that they had to flee from their countries for various reasons and other artists, creative persons. On the walls memories were drawn of their lost homeland, the sirenuous
flight, the dangerous sea, drowning people. Parts of bed frames, no longer needed in emergency accommodation, were composed in such a way that they remind you of tents, boats or the lost daHEIM. Their personal histories and these works reflecting upon them are taken as representatives for a vast number of people who have become homeless.

At that time, they were just about to start a following project; the interdisciplinary performance production named ‘Die Könige’ (transl.: ‘The Kings’). Along with theatre, music and dance performances, one part of this production became a large art installation named ‘PASSAGE’, to whose creation I contributed by weekly participating. The creation of the installation took place in the large textile room of a former cigarette factory BAT (British-American-Tobacco) located far from the centre in the locality Hackenfelde of the borough Spandau, which currently functions as one of the largest refugee emergency accommodations in Berlin. The textile room is an open space for all residents of the accommodation and everyone could contribute or look at the installation being created.

“At the beginning we asked the people in the accommodation about their wishes, about what they would like to have to make lives better. What came out the most was that they need privacy” explained Charlotte Danoy Kent who coordinates the creation. Taking these conversations with residents as a starting point, the idea came up of the notion of a tent as the temporal home where people go through, using see-through plastic and clothing as one of the things that are left behind along the way to make its roof. The structure forms the scaffolding of a DOMO, a tent developed for disaster operations by ‘More than Shelters’. See through plastic, to symbolise the (non)privacy, the clothes as your first home, the read threat used to link all people and stories. PASSAGE is a visual attempt to express the state of hovering. “Passage is – regardless of our background or our current position – a reality for all of us. Some of us may have a HEIM with a roof over their heads – but who knows for how long and where the next destination lies. We are all constructors of reality on the lookout for our kingdom” (Charlotte Danoy Kent).

Through my participation, I started to understand that, much more than about the final product, this project was about the being, talking and creating together, about the “combining art with life”, as Barbara Caveng described. The process of creating the art is in a sense a way to deconstruct a border between the participants. Whilst sewing, cutting strings and thoughtfully attaching them to the tent structure, I came to actually know the people and their stories that I before only spoke about. Then, the work is shared with a public, another way to deconstruct and shed light on borders (see paragraph 6.2).

The second collective creative project I participated in was the film project named ‘Wir sind Marzahn’ initiated by Cordula Bienstein of MSD Marzahn-Hellersdorf. This film project is a way to bring together people that have fled, people with a migration background and all other newly-arrived or long-established residents of the borough Marzahn-Hellersdorf in the former east of urban space Berlin. With guidance of film-makers Hanne Klaas and Eva-Luise Volkmann, short documentary- and fictive film contributions are created from the beginning of getting to know each other and brainstorming ideas, to the end of editing and a public film screening and discussion. This format
hence not only provides people that have fled their home countries a way to deal with and share their (hi)story, much more it ‘facilitates encounters’ between people on the eye level. The following excerpt of the field notes from the first encounter illustrates this:

“From the first moment we came together as a group with the mission of making a short film, this mission formed the basis for our contact. Already during the brainstorming for film ideas we got to know each other little by little, through sharing some stories, showing each other photographs and discussing. What most of us have in common is that we are new in the city and new to film-making, this seems to create a balanced basis to meet, with a healthy dose of curiosity towards each other” (field notes, 23 May).

Participating and contributing to these collective creative projects showed that through ‘facilitating encounters’ they rather implicitly contribute to the deconstruction of the b/ordering dynamic that exists in Berlin between long-established and newly-moved residents (see paragraph 4.3) by bringing people of both groups together on the basis of something they have in common.

Furthermore, the end product that results from this ‘creating together’ was in both cases brought to a wider public. The installation PASSAGE was transported out of the textile room in the emergency accommodation in outer borough Spandau and transported to the centre of the city to be
shown at art festival ‘48 Hours Neukölln’ in front of the Kindl, Museum for Contemporary Art (see *Plate 30*) and thereafter it could be watched in the garden of the Museum of European Cultures.

The two short films we created during ‘Wir sind Marzahn’ named ‘10 Minuten’ (transl.: ‘10 minutes’) and ‘Die Hoffnung der Asche’ (transl.: ‘The hope of the ashes’) were screened in City Locality Centre Mosaik in locality Marzahn for all participants, their friends, residents of the locality and other interested. Besides, they can be watched by everyone one the Vimeo channel of the project. Albeit the process of ‘creating together’ and the ‘facilitating of encounters’ and the deconstructed borders between the participants of these kind of projects remain largely unseen by the audience, the sharing of their end-results contributes to deconstruct b/ordering dynamics and their mechanisms in one or more aforementioned ways in which creative practices can do so (see paragraphs 6.1, 6.2 and 6.3).

The importance of the ‘creating together’ aspect as a way in which creative practices can contribute to border deconstruction and illumination was also mentioned by various City Locality Coordinators during the expert interviews. “Producing art is not enough. It is always important to include people in the process, which does not happen often” says CLC Neriman Kurt (18 May). “Making art together can help to reduce the borders between closeness and openness to other (until then) unknown people” says CLC Seemann (15 June) and adds also that “[i]t is not so much about the end product, but about the process of making together”. Also CLC Sylvia Stepprath (15 June) says that when *created* together, art brings people together and according to CLC Lars Schmitz (18 May) this can help to “reduce, but not solve, the ‘social explosive’. One notices that one can start something with each other, even if one comes from completely different contexts”.

What most of them answer to the question of how creative practice could contribute to deal with the by them mentioned b/ordering dynamics is something in line with what CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May) tells me: “Doing something productive together, that’s the smartest of this matter”, by which she and others implied that the ‘togetherness’ is more important than the ‘art’ when it comes to creatively ‘facilitating encounters’ as a way to contribute to deconstruct and shed light on b/ordering dynamics and their mechanisms. The questions that CLC Maike Janssen (13 June) poses to me and herself during the interview contribute to this point: “Where does the artistic start? What is art? Perhaps it is more about ‘the creative’?” Their perspectives caught my attention, and is also the reason for choosing the brought term ‘creative practices’ instead of ‘art’ or ‘artistic practices’ except for when mentioned explicitly by one of the respondents. With Joseph Beuys’ brought conception of ‘art’ in mind, this resulted in questioning the following: in the context of border deconstruction, shouldn’t the facilitation of these encounters in itself also be regarded as a kind of art – a creative practice – that contributes to deconstruct and illuminate these borders?

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57 See website Vimeo channel of Wir sind Marzahn: https://vimeo.com/wirsindmarzahn
6.5.2 The ‘art’ of facilitating encounters

“It is about coming together through common interests. Be it painting or cooking together”

(Elke Schönrock-Astilla, 9 June).

According the twenty locality ‘experts’ I interviewed who daily work with the b/ordering dynamics present in urban space Berlin, the previously asked question should be answered with a clear ‘yes’. Therefore, this sub-paragraph addresses the ‘art’ of creating encounters a creative practice that contributes to border deconstruction and illumination. Although most of the following examples would, generally speaking, not be neither regarded as ‘creative practice’ nor as ‘art’, it will be shown here that also these practices are able to ‘facilitate encounters’.

Because this way of ‘dealing with borders otherwise’ derived for the largest part from the conducted expert interviews, firstly, the floor will be given to some of their words that are illustrative to this. CLC Katharina Kühnel (23 May) explains collectively working on something matters the most:

“When it comes to the conflicts and frictions, it’s best to work together on something. So people can make music together, work in the garden together, are can be but not has to be a part of it […] What is important, I think, is doing something over a longer period of time, in a participative way where people can join, no matter what it is”.

In the same line CLC Maike Janssen (13 June) says: “This experiencing together, getting to know each other whilst doing something, I think is a key”. The manner of carrying out this ‘key’ therefore “always depends entirely on what the people want, what comes from the people” explains CLC Thomas Mampel (8 June). “It is about finding common interests” says CLC Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June).

One example of what the ‘key’ could be is the encounter created by cooking and eating together, which is, according to CLC Susanne Besch (2 May) “the largest common interest”. Also the experiences of regularly participating in the meeting project ‘Meat n Eat’ in locality Prenzlauer Berg’ illustrate that indeed, cooking and eating can serve as a means of ‘encounter’ and thereby contribute to bring people together and deconstruct borders. In the case of ‘Meat n Eat’ the aim is to create encounters between ‘old and new neighbours’. Once a week everyone is welcome from noon to late in the evening to go grocery shopping, cook, eat, clean, and sometimes even dance Syrian Dakba together. The simple daily actions that are carried out here together, form an approachable starting point to get into conversation.

Another frequently mentioned manner for the creation of encounters is the seemingly simple, but in praxis more complex, practice of having or making spaces were different people can meet and spend time together:
“It is about creating meeting spaces. So initiating any situations, be it celebrations or actions, where people can come together so that all possible fears can be levelled or reorganised and to mediate between the complexities of many different groups” (Thomas Potyka, 30 May).

In addition to spaces where people cook, communicate or teach each other a new language, an example of such meeting space is the share-house project named ‘Refugio Berlin’ in the locality Neukölln where I worked in the café during the period the fieldwork for this research project. The idea of ‘Refugio Berlin’ is to be a place for shelter, community and activities for wanderers of all cultures from all over the world. Their name refers to the place that provides shelter for pilgrims walking the Santiago de Compostella in Spain. It contributes to deconstruct borders by bringing people living and working there together on the eye level and welcoming all visitors in their café and meeting space.

Another example that deserves to be mentioned is the encounter of people from all around the world on every warm enough Sunday in the Mauerpark, located between the localities Prenzlauer Berg and Gesundbrunnen, stretching itself elongated in the former death-strip between east and west. Here, hundreds of locals and visitors mingle every Sunday to look at the continually redecorated former inner Wall, to stroll around the stalls of the flea market, to relax, picnic and play in the park or to listen and dance to live musicians or the outdoor karaoke sessions. And although they might not often encounter in the sense of actually getting into conversations, they do dance, listen and watch to the same performances and all together form a dynamic whole.

Lastly, the City Locality Centres themselves are, of course, mastering ‘the art of creating encounters’. All City Locality Coordinators mentioned the word ‘encounter’ at least one time whilst describing their work and way to deal with the present b/ordering dynamics. As Sabine Behrens puts it in a beautiful way: “We are an open house for all people. A house of open encounter”, or “a bridge between citizens” (Neriman Kurt, 18 May). The STZs create encounters by providing the locality residents access to those things they need (Sabrina Hermann, 22 May), providing social consultation and organising activities, festivities and all kinds of situations where people can meet, which might even happen “in the hallways of our building”, as CLC Ira Freigang (1 June) says smiling. In these situations “the borders and conflicts between the people suddenly do not play a role anymore […] because the people do not experience ‘the dividing’ but rather ‘the connecting’”, says Thomas Mampel (8 June). It is also in these situations that people realise that they have much more in common than they thought (Lars Schmitz, 18 May; Katharina Kühnel, 23 May). Through these situations, hence, various prejudices can be deconstructed. What is thereby very important, is to include both, the long-established and the newly-arrived locality residents in these situations (Claudia Schwarz, 15 June). At the same time however, this is what is most challenging, explains Anette Maurer-Kartal (20 June). “One constantly has to search for nodes, for connections. For things that are across all” says Claudia Schwarz (15 June). And in the same line CLC Sabrina Hermann (22 May) says: “Again and again it is the attempt to let people think out of the box”.

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To recapitulate; what this paragraph showed, is that fourthly, creative practices can also contribute to the deconstruction and shedding light on b/ordering dynamics and their functioning mechanisms by manner of ‘creatively facilitating encounters’. This can be done through creative practices that foster discussions, some of which have been mentioned in the previous paragraphs, but even more so by creative practices in which the process itself is carried out collectively.

Furthermore, this paragraph showed is that the ‘facilitation of encounters’ in itself can be regarded as ‘art’ in a sense. This ‘art’ of facilitating encounters can also contribute to the deconstruction and shedding light on b/ordering dynamics and their functioning mechanisms. It is not meant to be argued here that thus everything is or could be art. But the point that is meant to be made is that when it comes to deconstructing borders on a local level between people, it cannot be left unmentioned that one important way to do so is through facilitating of encounters. As derived from the field this is in many cases a real challenge. Therefore, it is an ‘art’ in itself to be capable of creating moments where different people encounter that would generally be divided by a b/ordering dynamic and its working mechanism.

6.5 The borders of art

The last paragraph of this chapter focusses on the shortcomings of artistic or creative practices themselves. In the interviews, various City Locality Coordinators, but also some creatives, shared their scepticism about if and how these practices can contribute to deconstruct and shed light on b/ordering dynamics and their functioning mechanisms. In order to draw valuable and relevant conclusions about which and how creative practices can contribute to border deconstruction, and rather than ‘simply assuming the power of art’ (Ingram, 2011), it is of great importance to also discuss these shortcomings in this thesis.

6.2.1 Context and audience

“Art is a first step. The power of its effect depends on the people, on how they react and on what they receive and what they take from it” (Marta Lodola, 14 June).

The first ‘border of art’ that was mentioned various ‘experts’ and ‘creatives’ revolves around the context and the audience. The contribution that a creative practice can make to deconstructing and shedding of light on certain b/ordering dynamics, strongly depends on the context in which it is conducted or placed in. When the creative creation does not fit the context, it will be unlikely to contribute to deconstruct any border.

An example is given by City Locality Coordinator Elvira Smoloka (7 June) in the quarter Tegel Süd of the locality Tegel in borough Reinickendorf, a quarter that, for the largest part, consists of social housing blocks. “Art can connect” she agrees, “but it can also result in the opposite”.

“After the interview, she [Elvira Smoloka] walks with me outside through the housing blocks. Two minutes later we stand still and turn around to face the side-wall of two of the seven-story buildings. We look at a huge mural, painted all over the surface of the two side-walls. It depicts a little girl, wearing what seems to be a dirty white nightdress. She is leaning with her head against wall or a room. On the other side, wounded figures are likewise leaning or sitting against trees in a bare winter forest. The whole work is beautiful in a sense, but at the same time it gives me the chills. Seeing it so large on these buildings and in this context, does not feel right somehow. I ask myself; what does it do in this neighbourhood?” (field notes, 7 June).

According to the rather hidden description plate, this mural (see Plate 31), commissioned by the social housing company and carried out by Urban Nation, a Museum for Urban Contemporary Art, is made by an artist named Boronda. His mural is meant to symbolise the refugee debate. The girl finds herself in the supposedly secure Europe and sees the dramatic reality of the world; the wounded people in the bare forest. “The only way in which it connects the people here is that they all dislike it, said Elvira...
Smoloka after we watched it for a while and a man passed by that happily told us “in two months they are allowed to take it off”. Apparently this mural had received a lot of criticism of the quarter’s residents and some children that could see it from their kindergarten had struggled with nightmares.

“One has to look what the target group is and whom one wants to reach. It this group is not bothered with modern art, for example, I could place the most beautiful art project, but they would think ‘what is this’” says Neriman Kurt (18 May) during the interview. Her statement applies to this example quite well. This example shows clearly that the contribution of art has it borders and that it needs a sensitivity for the context and the audience. This same mural would have received different reactions in a locality like Kreuzberg or, when presented in a specific exhibition. Also Lars Schmitz (18 May) mentioned that using art to deal with borders “functions quite well for those that are interested, but there are also people that have no interest”.

A further example that shows the relevance of context and audience for the contribution art can make to border deconstruction was thought through by Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) who works in a quarter of Neukölln where gentrification and the amount of holiday apartments for tourists have created and enlarged present b/ordering dynamics in the quarter. “We sometimes think about whether we could do something about the topic of tourism with street theatre. But then, on the other hand, we saw the danger of it as it could develop into a new highlight for exactly those tourists themselves. You really have to be a bit careful”.

6.6.2 Contribution to change?

Secondly, scepticism was shared about whether art could contribute to bring actual change. This is illustrated by the following words of Larissa Hermanns (10 May) assistant director of KUNSTASYL e.V. from our conversation during lunchtime in the emergency accommodation in Spandau:

“Art can be a good means to point at problems, to shed light on borders. But in our society, art itself does not have the power to bring actual change, this kind of power is solely in the hands of politicians”.

In the same line, Schmitz (18 May) said that “art can help to move the course, but the actual decisions must come from a different level […] it can bring people together and deconstruct a border of prejudices between them, but that all does not matter if nothing changes on a political level”. “Art cannot accompany political processes. I do not think it can really change something”, says Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) sceptically and Elke Schönrock-Astilla (9 June) is especially sceptical about the contribution to change of one-time creative actions.

These statements show another border of art, or; a way in which art itself is bordered through its current position in society. According to Hermanns (10 May), there should me more collaboration and communication between the currently decision-making politicians and creative projects, and with all projects that actually work on the ground in general.
6.6.3 The term ‘art’

The third ‘border of art’ that came forward is the border that the term ‘art’ carries itself. “By calling a certain project ‘art’ you already risk excluding a group of people that feel that they do not ‘understand’ or ‘like’ art, whereas you can sometimes include more people by calling the project art after you started it” shared Katja Aßmann (10 June) of the Centre of Art and Public Space with me from her experience.

For artist Georg Klein (8 June), the term art is some sort of border because his projects, which he often positions between reality and fiction, would not function the same way if he would present them as ‘art’ beforehand. “If I would present it as an art project, then the people would immediately switch off their brains […]”, he explains. “Because it is just art. And yes, in art ‘you can to everything’”. The term art would prevent him to reach his aim of making people more sensitive to borders.

Lisa Glauer (5 June) is critical of the term ‘artist’ as it is, according to her, to essentialist. Furthermore, she explains that to her it includes a certain hierarchy when it comes to collaborations with people from other disciplines. In the interdisciplinary projects that she is part of she therefore prefers to rather use the term ‘initiator of art project’.

At the same time, the term allows to be played with and to be used differently on the basis of what one ones. This is illustrated in the following words of CLC Maike Janssen (13 June):

“One does not have to call it art. This might directly frighten a lot of people that then think: ‘O god, o god, art, I have no idea about it, I cannot even paint’ or ‘I cannot do anything like that’. But that is also the nice thing about it; that it depends on the way you convey it. That you do not necessarily have possess a skill to create art or something creative. Actually everything is possible there.”

6.6 Recap

As came forward in this chapter, four ways in which creative practices contribute to deconstruct and shed light on b/ordering dynamics and there functioning mechanisms derived from the data assembled in the field. Firstly, creative practices contribute to the deconstruction of borders through ‘creatively informing’ their audience and thereby making the information more accessible and the border in question more graspable. Secondly, creative practices contribute to the deconstruction of borders through ‘creatively discussing’ a specific b/ordering phenomenon, often because according to the creator there is an injustice at stake. This second manner can be carried out in the public space, through performances and actions, by combining investigation with creation, through exhibitions about specific border phenomena or by creative centres focussing on such phenomena. Thirdly, creative practices can serve as ‘burning barricade’ behind which one can hide to get less legal.
problems and thereby deconstruct a certain border. The forth way in which borders are deconstructed by creative practices is through ‘creatively facilitating encounters’, which can be done through collective creative projects, as well as through various other practices that master the ‘art’ of facilitating encounters. Lastly, the focus was on various borders of creative practices that revolve around its context and audience, its actual contribution to change and the term ‘art’ itself. What needs to be noted in order to not risk what Lisa Glauer calls ‘the scientification or academisation of art’, is that naturally, these various ways in which creative practices can contribute do border deconstruction are not taking place independent from each other. Thus, none of these creative practices clearly contributes to deconstruction in only one of these ways at the time.
7 | Conclusion

In this final chapter the assembled empirical data about the in/visible b/ordering dynamics, their working mechanisms and the creative practices from the fourth, fifth and sixth chapter and the theoretical data from the second chapter will be brought together. They will be reflected on in order to answer of the following research question that is central to this exploration: **What are contemporary in/visible b/ordering dynamics in urban space Berlin and how can creative practices potentially contribute to deconstruct and shed light on these b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms?**

7.1 The in/visible b/ordering dynamics and their working mechanisms

What the findings of this research project show clearly, is that borders can be more than the clear-cut separation lines that they were regarded as before the shift from a modern to a more critical or postmodern perspective took place in the early 90s (Brambilla et al., 2016: 1). As the in chapter four discussed six most notable b/ordering dynamics on the city’s stage show; borders can be also dynamic and consist of social processes and practices (ibid.).

On the stage of urban space Berlin there is the haunting b/ordering dynamic of the past between the eastern and the western part of the city, manifesting itself in the extensive memory culture, in physical traces and in more invisible remnants. But as also written by Ward (2011), whilst working to overcome the divided past, several other b/ordering dynamics have developed that belong to the b/ordering dynamics of present-day Berlin. Very determinative is the b/ordering dynamic between centre and periphery, which is closely linked with the b/ordering dynamic between long-established and newly arrived actors on Berlin’s stage. Who is this newly arrived actor, depends largely on where in the city the dynamic takes place: Whereas in the centre the newly arrived is a rather prosperous ‘expat’, tourist or investor, in the periphery, the newly arrived in the periphery is a rather poor displaced person, or a refugee who is placed in one of the accommodations that are mostly located in the city’s outskirts. The b/ordering dynamic that plays a large role for all these dynamics, is that concerning wealth: “Your money decides whether you belong” (Seemann, 13 June); whether you are included or excluded; whether you can (continue to) afford a place to live in the frequently visited, lively, diverse, prioritised and beloved centre of the German capital Berlin.

Furthermore, what can be concluded is that the b/ordering dynamics on the stage of urban space Berlin are of a very active nature; they constantly move, and in their movement, repeatedly and actively determine anew ‘what is to be included and excluded’ (Van Houtum and Naerssen, 2001). Particularly the ‘outwards movement’ of the b/ordering dynamic between centre and periphery is constantly defining new ‘in between’ localities in which both, the central and the peripheral processes collide. This dynamic continues to define where Berlin is ‘expensive’ and where Berlin is ‘affordable’.
Furthermore, through the ‘multiperspectical’ (Rumford, 2012) approach of this study, it became clear that, as argued by Rumford (2018) and Bialasiewicz (2012), the Berlin ‘borderwork’ is made up from a ‘fluid assemblage of functions, mechanisms and actors in the everyday life of citizens’. The b/ordering dynamics concern relationships between Berlin residents, but are also present in certain policies, or even in more general structures of the city.

Furthermore, it can be concluded that the mechanisms that work to create, facilitate and sustain the b/ordering dynamics at stake and that provide these dynamics with meaning, are hidden in what Paasi (2009) would call the ‘imaginative apparatus’. Through carrying out the ‘fundamental task’ in border phenomenology of ‘identifying and deconstructing the meanings and intents that the imaginative apparatus of borders hides’ (Paasi in Giudice and Giubilaro, 2015: 83), seven working mechanisms of the present b/ordering dynamics in Berlin were identified and discussed in the fifth chapter of this thesis. These mechanisms are much interwoven and assist each other’s working. The first working mechanism is the way in which is dealt with the divided past since the fall of the wall in 1989. Moreover, the ever increasing amount of investments and constructions in mostly the centre and the way in which housing and rent politics are organised are both working mechanisms that feed b/ordering dynamics between centre and periphery, between long-established and newly arrived residents, between poor and rich by immensely increasing the number and the nature of actors on the stage of the city centre while displacing others. Then, there is the mechanism of prioritising and commodifying the city’s beloved centre and the rather opposed problematizing ‘lacking’ areas through particular instruments and rhetoric. Also the current design of the ‘arrival architecture’ that consists of a convergence of multiple aspects can be considered a working mechanism. And lastly, the decision-making structure that defines the extend in which Berlin residents can participate in the planning of their boroughs, localities and Kieze works to create, facilitate and sustain the current b/ordering dynamics in Berlin.

Through their various regulations, structures, strategies, systems, representations, legitimisations, rhetoric, narrations and instruments, these working mechanisms together form the imaginative apparatus of the contemporary b/ordering dynamics that are present in urban space Berlin. In different manners they create, facilitate and sustain these various dynamics and provide them with meaning and thereby form the answer to ‘the how-question of borders’ that is the main focus of critical border studies (Van Houtum et al., 2005). Overarching these mechanisms is again ‘the money-question’; the execution of many instruments and constructions that these working mechanisms include is outsourced, which results in the emergence of further economic interests and a problematic short-term thinking, both of which complement to the imaginative apparatus at work by moreover including the ‘rich’ and excluding the ‘poor.

Lastly, it can be thus affirmed that indeed, borders have ‘vacillated’ also in urban space Berlin,
to borough Balibar’s famous word choice (2003). Borders are moving and multiplying at different points within societies.

7.2 Creative practices and b/ordering dynamics

In this research project four ways in which creative practices contribute to deconstruct and shed light on b/ordering dynamics and there working mechanisms have been identified. Firstly, creative practices contribute to the deconstruction of borders through ‘creatively informing’ their audience and thereby making the information more accessible and the border in question more graspable. Secondly, as Giudice and Giubilaro (2015: 81) write, creative practices have shown to be able to contribute to unravel the borders’ working mechanisms by showing their “constructed and contested nature” and unveiling them as “cultural artefacts and political formations” – by ‘creatively discussing’ specific b/ordering phenomena. Thirdly, creative practices can serve as ‘burning barricade behind which one can hide to get less legal problems’. The forth way in which borders are deconstructed by creative practices is through ‘creatively facilitating encounters’. What derived also from data gathered in the field, is that the ‘facilitation of encounters’ in itself can be regarded as ‘art’. This coincides with Chantal Mouffe’s approach of what [public] art is about: “Public art is not, according to my approach, art in the public space, but an art that institutes a public space, a space of common action among people.”

Depending on the b/ordering dynamic and functioning mechanism in question, as well as on the context and the audience, some ways in which creative practices can might better contribute to deconstruction and illumination than others. In the case wherein one specific b/ordering dynamic or functioning mechanism needs to be deconstructed and illuminated, ‘creatively discussing’ this border might for better than facilitating encounters. However, when it comes the b/ordering dynamics in everyday life in urban space Berlin of which most take place between groups of people, ‘facilitating contact’, in whatsoever way, is of great importance, as also clearly stated by the experts.

Whereas the creative practices that take place in public places (murals, exhibitions, performances) have the ability to reach a larger audience and make people stand still ‘for at least one little moment’, their impact might not be as durable because of their non-committedness or inaccessibility to people that cannot or do not want to grasp their message. What is strong about the creative practices that facilitate encounters is that these can actually make people get to know each other more in depth through their more durable nature, however, they ask for commitment and time of the participants and therefore it is more challenging to attract many people to join. Hence, all ways have their positive and negative sides and are very context specific.

In the exploration of ways in which creative practices can contribute to border deconstruction, also the ‘border of art’ derived. The interviewed City Locality Coordinators were rather sceptical about the actual change that creative practices could bring about – what Giudice and Giubilaro call art’s ‘potential to alternate and interrupt bordering logics’ (2015: 97) and what Berelowitz calls the
‘transformative power of artistic practices’ (1997: 72). Rather, as argued by Ingram (2011), it derived from this research that creative practices can serve as “contributor to political and spatial transformation” (ibid.: 218) but it should be acknowledged that the power of art is not ‘magical’ and that art can also create new borders, even if the artist aims to challenge the existing ones – think of the example of the mural by Borondo in the quarter Tegel Süd.

7.3 On and behind the stage of urban space Berlin

On the stage of urban space Berlin, multiple interwoven visible and invisible dynamics are present that border and order the large variety of actors involved in the spectacle that is currently performed on this stage. These dynamics, between east and west, centre and periphery, old and new, poor and rich, are created, facilitated and sustained by a complex assemblage of working mechanisms hidden behind the stage that flow into each other and assist each other. Together, these dynamics and their working mechanisms are a danger to Berlin’s still existing charm and to those people residing in the city that do not have the money to buy their ‘right to the city’. Through both, increasingly outsourcing of tasks that were formerly executed by the city itself and through increasingly selling city-owned space to investors for new development projects, third party actors, often with economic interests, get more say in the city. This further complicates the amount of- and the relation between the actors on the city’s stage. Rather than living with each other, they increasingly live side by side and the contact between them decreases.

Often, this spectacle remains unnoticed; most attention on Berlin’s stage goes to its memory culture or to the ‘cool Kiez’ of the beloved centre, two things that have become increasingly commodified and prioritised. Therefore, a way has to be found to shed light on this stage as a whole, to make the spectacle visible and to deconstruct what is happening both on and behind it. Creative practices have proven to be such a way that can shed light and deconstruct. They can figure, in a sense, as the lighting technicians of the spectacle. With the special light that they shed on the stage they will let some of the actors stand still ‘for at least one little moment’ to look at the stage, the city, in its totality, to see or even encounter those actors that are not the middle of the prioritised and commodified attention.

Should Berlin be named ‘the capital of freedom’ because it is the place where we have learned that ‘walls are never a good idea’? Does the absence of the physical division by walls naturally mean the freedom ‘in every conceivable dimension’? Those were the questions I asked myself when I encountered the beBerlin billboard on the first day and I was just about to delve into this research project. ‘Done with walls’, yes indeed, and that is certainly something to be proud of. However, opposing the ‘walled’ past and the ‘free’ present hides not only the fact that the past wall has its clear effects up until today and furthermore, that there are other dividing lines present in contemporary urban space Berlin which take on many different forms. For the complex spectacle on the stage named ‘Berlin’ consists of more than what is visible or what can be told in words. It is something that can be
felt through being there, through *flâneuring* on the stage with open senses and through telling stories, opinions and experiences deriving from different places of the city. As Mexican poet and writer Octavio Paz formulates it beautifully:

“...cities are as poems, you cannot reduce the poem to its meaning or to its material properties – for instance, sound – the poem is more than a text, more than a texture...”

### 7.5 Suggestions for further research

After having conducted this exploration of b/ordering dynamics, their mechanisms and creative border deconstruction in urban space Berlin there are several suggestions that can be made for further research. First, and in line with Bernt, Grell and Holm (2013), I would encourage every research project that takes an urban space as whole as a location of analysis. Albeit this is not the easiest way to conduct a qualitative research, it provides data about how various dynamics that take place on different locations in the urban space relate and serve each other. Because most researches in Berlin focus on one specific place or phenomenon, this view on ‘the city as a whole’ remains rarely discussed.

Second, taking one specific concept as a starting point, or lens, to explore a certain research field has proven to be a useful strategy. It helps to remain open for all possible meanings, perceptions and stories that are encountered, and furthermore it connects very different phenomena that are usually rarely studied together. A suggestion for further would thus be to test this strategy in another urban space, or in another context than ‘the urban’ with the concept of a border, or another starting point.

Third, I would suggest further research focussing on the localities ‘in between’ that have derived from this research project as highly interesting areas where both central and peripheral b/ordering dynamics manifest themselves. They are thus positioned in such a way that they can serve as a concentrate of many dynamics taking place in the whole city.

Moreover, a large number of phenomena and themes have been encountered during this research project that could be further zoomed into with qualitative research. For example the theme of imaging of certain neighbourhoods of the city; how are these images of certain neighbourhoods created and sustained? Why does the image of neighbourhood X differ from the image of neighbourhood Y? To what extend do they coincide with the reality on the ground? How do they influence the residents? Other themes to focus on could be the influence of ‘expats’ and tourists that come and leave the city, the nature of decision-making structures, the complex maze of actors of Berlin’s ‘arrival architecture’ or the big question of how Berlin’s charm can be maintained.

For critical border scholars, the suggestion deriving from this exploration would be to continue to capture the ‘changing perspective of what borders are’ (Parker and Vaughan-Williams, 2009: 583)
through studying the various forms in which internal borders can manifest themselves and are experienced within urban spaces or other places within society.

Lastly I would plea for an increased acknowledgement and inclusion of the potential of creative practices in qualitative human geographical, anthropological and other social scientific explorations. This incorporation can consist of exploring further contributions creative practices can have, using creative practices as part of the research methods, or using them as a form of presentation, which can make, as demonstrated in this thesis, information more assessable and graspable.

7.6 Recommendations for praxis

From the interviews that were conducted with the twenty ‘experts’ from different localities spread over the twelve boroughs of the city, a large number of recommendations derived of what changes would make the dealing with the b/ordering dynamics in Berlin easier in praxis. These recommendations can be roughly divided into changes from ‘above’ and changes from ‘below’.

7.6.1 Changes from ‘above’

The following recommendations for changes from ‘above’ that could make it easier to deal with b/ordering dynamics in the ‘field’ or lessen their problematic consequences arose from the different data that were assembled.

First, all decisions of the Senate, the borough administration or other actors should take a more long-term approach. Thinking through decisions, rather than dealing with challenges ‘as fast as possible’ will help to actually resolve them instead of postponing them or displacing them to the peripheral areas of the city.

Second, to give the word to Lars Schmitz (18 May): “If there is no fundamental change in the housing policy, it will be so that only people with a certain income can afford themselves to live in the centre”. There should be this more housing for all residents of the city. Affordable housing to be precise. Social housing should be ‘re-socialised’. As Thomas Mampel (8 June) said during the interview: “Displacement from living quarters and competition between disadvantaged groups no longer works if there is sufficient living space for all”.

Third, it would be in favour of the long-established residents that live in central, often ‘hyped’ localities to define a slot on the number of new businesses that is allowed to open in one street or quarter. “You could determine a certain number of businesses in a certain circle of metres, suggests Neriman Kurt (18 May). And also Christine Skowronska-Koch (22 May) argues that what would be important for the local residents is a tightening up in terms of tourism, instead of “always this ‘we want to market the city’ where it is the question of who really benefits of this marketing”.

Fourth, less outsourcing is highly recommended, something which counts for the construction of all buildings and projects that are to serve as a living space of people. These social projects should
be executed by the city itself or at least to be so commodified. The smaller the number of projects that are outsourced, the littler the economic interests involved, which means there is less competition between holders and the quality of for example the MUFs and Tempohomes will be more thought-through.

The fifth recommendation is to create a more clear and central structure for the current maze of actors that are present in the urban space. “The Locality Centres could serve as the basis for all work. To connect many small initiatives that actually do the same now, but on their own”, Besch (3 May) suggests. The idea of Katharina Kühnel is that “[…] it would be good to have a main actor in the locality work and one borough officer who is responsible for the specific Kiez”, Katharina Kühnel (23 May) suggests. And Claudia Schwarz (15 June) said that “[t]here should be one public office that publishes all decisions and presents them openly to the city”. Furthermore, while both ‘inclusion’ and ‘participation’ are of great importance, a way should be found to prevent these from becoming ‘empty terms’ that are solely used for receiving funds. Participation should never be ‘pseudo-participation’.

The last recommended change from ‘above’ is to generally give more support to the STZs, financially but also in terms of their role in decision-making structures. They know what is going on in their localities. Therefore, it is recommended that before constructing or changing something in a certain Kiez of locality, their advice should be obtained. This recommendation holds also that instruments such as QMs or BENN should be implemented carefully, if at all, and always in conversation and collaboration with the STZ of subsequent area.

As Maike Jannsen (13 June) points out however, creating the right conditions from ‘above’, does not automatically mean that the problems on the ground will decrease. “Of course, you can create frame conditions that are good or maybe even optimal, but these alone do not bring it either. Because you then have to actually start to make use of the opportunities that are there, and this can be done by the people, or not”.

7.6.2 Changes from ‘below’

“looking from the field what people want”
(Claudia Schwarz, 15 June).

Complementary to or independently of the recommended changes from ‘above’, the following changes from ‘below’ are recommended on the basis of the data gathered in the field.

The first recommendation that was clearly and emphatically mentioned by all City Locality Coordinators that were spoken to, is to create room for more encounters. To give the word to Sabrina Hermann (22 May):

“Ordinary encounters. They [the people] have to get to know each other. If you have once achieved that they do not only eat cake together but bake the cake together, then you have
actually gained a lot. For then the exchange begins between the people that rather tend to be excluded and the people who exclude”.

“The less you know each other, the more reservations, fears and prejudices there are” says also Ira Freigang (1 June). And Sylvia Stepbraths (15 June) words add to that; “When people get to know each other they will notice; ‘oh, the other is not so different from me’. This will take these prejudices away a little.

A second recommendation for change from ‘below’ is to stimulate and support ideas and initiatives that come from the Berlin residents themselves, as well as to act on the basis of what is needed for them. “The local politics could support them by simply providing funding”, says Katharina Kühnel (23 May). According to Thomas Potyka (30 May), this needs an “authentic local governance that is interested in the long-term, and does work to favor itself, nor pursues any global economic interests. […] This will help to sustain this wealth that Berlin has, in opposition of other world cities such as NY”. According to him and other ‘experts’ it is recommended to act in line with the ideas and desires of those who live in a place and want to stay there for longer. If one were to slow down and organize with one another, and according to the real needs those who call themselves Berliners a lot of negative effects can be avoided (Thomas Potyka, 30 May).

According to Neriman Kurt (18 May) however; “[t]he only thing that helps is when people go back to the barricades […] I believe only the pressure from below can in some form steer what is going on above”. Her advice would be: “Go to the street - defend yourself!” Elvira Smoloka (9 June) advises that “[y]ou have to omit the stereotypes. If we omit the stereotypes, then we notice that not everything is so bad’. The most important thing according to Claudia Schwarz (15 June) is to “[l]et the networks between people exist. A connection must remain”. And Ira Freigang (1 June) says: “There are many things we can already change now without needing money. And it is always in small steps”.

### 7.4 Reflections and limitations

During a reflective conversation with artist Marta Lodola that I closely collaborated with, we realised that our approach of choosing the concept of the border as a starting point to work from in order to see what ‘the field’ and the people in this field would tell us is very valuable. This ‘border lens’ turned out to be the right approach to prevent falling into the trap of ‘researching the other’ as the researcher from another context. It helped to approach all people in a natural non-hierarchical way and to be open to receive all phenomena that our respondents experienced as borders.

At the same time however, there are a few limitations that this approach holds that I need to be reflective of. First of all, opening up the concept of the border this much can also be dangerous in the sense that almost everything then can be regarded as a border and it becomes rather challenging to narrow down your findings. Secondly, you need to notice that when you ask people about borders, contrasts, frictions, you almost certainly will get binaries as an answer. This is because it is in the
nature of borders to create a distinction between things, situations, and groups. In this research project, this was not obstructive, as it helped to bring forward those b/ordering dynamics that are currently present in the urban space Berlin, and thereafter to identify those mechanisms out of the complex assemblage that play the largest role in creating, facilitating and sustaining the rather binary b/ordering dynamics. However, it is important to be reflective of these binary b/ordered groups and keep in mind that the border between them is never really clear-cut in the reality on the ground.

Furthermore, what needs to be noted here too is that there are also many kinds of borders that were mentioned by the experts, by people on the street and during the informal conversations that I decided to not include in the empirical chapters. These were; the border between places where families with small children go and the places where they not go, the border between smokers and non-smokers, the border of falling back into an alcohol addiction, the border created by the ever increasing use of internet data volumes on streets and public transportation which creates some kind of extraterritoriality, borders for disabled people, borders between mentalities during work, religious borders or conflicts, conflicts concerning drug dealing in public spaces and the border of social depravity of the many elderly people.

Also important to keep in mind, is that the Locality Centre coordinators who were considered as the ‘experts’ in this research, have answered from a certain perspective. This perspective has its impact on what came to be the b/ordering dynamics and working mechanisms that came to be discussed in this thesis; the social borders between (groups of) people.

Lastly, I have to stay reflective about the nature of the expertise that I gained through conducting this research project: I did not become an ‘expert’ in the sense that I got to know one specific b/ordering dynamic or place ‘by heart’. Rather, I became an ‘expert’ overviewing the Berlin stage as a whole, through bringing stories and experiences from the most different and distant places of the urban space, through telling their stories, and through showing how they are all closely related towards one another by their diverse and often invisible functioning mechanisms.
Plate 32  A solution?
Source: Schlette, 2017
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Appendix I. Interview guide ‘locality experts’

1. Locality
   - how would you describe the district and its inhabitants?

2. Contrasts, frictions, borders
   - what contrasts, frictions or borders do you experience in this locality?
     - how have these contrasts, frictions or borders originate?
     - why are these contrasts, frictions or borders still here?

3. Work in/of the STZ
   - what is the focus of the work in the STZ?
   - how do you deal with the present contrasts, frictions or borders in this locality?
     - in what way?
     - by what means?
     - how do you reach the residents?
   - how is your work related to the QM?
   - how is your work related to the borough administration?
   - how is your work related to the administration for urban development and housing?

4. Berlin-wide
   - what contrasts, frictions or borders do you thing are present in Berlin today?
     - which play the main roles at the moment?

5. Handling and change
   - how do you think should one deal with contrasts, frictions and borders in Berlin?
   - what changes would make it easier to deal with these contrasts, frictions and borders?
     - at what level would these changes have to take place?
   - what do you think about the use of art as a means to deal with these contrasts, frictions and borders?
     - what would be a way in which one could do this?
Appendix II. Interview guide ‘creatives’

1. **Your ‘art’**
   - how would you describe your ‘art’?
   - what does your art (and making it) mean to you?

2. **Your art and borders**
   - with what border or borders do you work in your art?
   - what role does your art play for this border/these borders?
   - what role does this border/do these borders play for your art?

3. **Aim**
   - what do you want to achieve with your art (in relation to borders)?

4. **Art and border more general**
   - what role can art in general play in relation to borders according to you?
   - can art contribute to deconstruct and shed light on borders?
     - if yes, in what ways could art do so?