# narrative space - time scapes

# (NARRABILITIES)

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# initial situation

"The historical and its consequences, the 'diachronic', the 'etymology' of locations in the sense of what happened at a particular spot or space and thereby changed it – all of this becomes inscribed in space. The past leaves its traces – time has its own script. Yet this space is always, now and formerly, a present space, given as an immediate whole, complete with its associations and connections in its actuality. Thus production process and product present themselves as two inseparable aspects, not as two separable ideas."

(Henri Lefebvre 1991, p. 37)

The processual (inscription, sedimentation, layering of meaning), which Henri Lefebvre addressed in "Production of Space," and movement, in the form of slow mobilities, embodied mobilities (actors), and local and global virtual flows, are assumed to be key aspects in the constitution of contemporary cityscapes and should be given special attention in this research project (see DFG application). The research focuses on the invisible (life-world, history) as well as the visible (topographic) dimensions of a landscape, which are first to be identified and then analyzed in regard to their nature, their inter connectivity (see also Bruno Latour "assemblage," ANT theory), and finally their relevance in the constitution of a specific space.

Of main interest are the in-between spaces that are still vaguely classified as undefined / uncertain — the third, the in-between, the terrains vagues (Ignasi Solà-Morales Rubió 1995), dismissed areas —, to which those involved attribute special qualities that give extraordinary importance (compensation spaces, spaces of possibility) to such sites within the dense fabric of urban space (see also Saskia Sassen 2006) – an open space. These spaces are the platforms for unusual and extraordinary occurrences (socio-cultural processes, encounters, approaches, understandings) that would not normally occur in predefined spaces. Hence, they create open spaces, breathing spaces, in an otherwise regulated, programmed environment, and potentially help to reduce tension in urban contexts (compensation areas). Saskia Sassen, who reflects in her essay "Making Interventions in Today's Massive Cities" on a spatial phenomenon similarily defined, describes these spaces as being "part of the interiority of a city, [that] yet lie outside of [their] organizing utility-driven logics and spatial frames." (Sassen 2006, p.1) In this research, 'undefined' refers also to intermediate spaces, marginal situations (Iris Aravot), moments, that can open up in an occupied space with clearly defined funcwtion (programmed space).

Their qualities are to be identified and developed more precisely (on the topographical as well as the narrative social, history level), in order to more deeply understand their intrinsic and perhaps even fostering elements and constellations, and to further develop and clarify the terminology used to describe such spaces. The concepts "narrability" and "timescape" are central (Iris Aravot).

It must also be checked as to whether it is possible to formulate the criteria necessary to describe such spaces in terms of a semantic body (what connotative meanings are attached to them?), and possibly formulate a spatial category (which patterns, qualities, physical features can emerge? Where can these spaces be found, where are they located? Can a "bearer" of narrabilities in physical space be identified?).

## Possible criteria:

width and size

marginality
accessibility – remoteness/isolation
richness – eventless/uneventful
ordinariness

obstacles/interferences, causing someone to pause, linger

seclusion
heterogeinity

Keeping the ascribed liberating quality of these spaces, as described earlier, in mind their importance for the individual as well as for the collective is intriguing once again and raises the question how these spaces, their still to be fully analyzed nature and qualities can be preserved. Especially if one assumes that they, despite being host to positive processes, cannot completely be left to their own, but need some sort of measure, intervention to make sure that they do not develop in 'no-go areas', but continue to be accessible and usable.

Analyzing their constituting factors and underlying dynamic processes, in this context the concepts ,Narrability' and ,Timescape' appear to be vital, is one aspect of deciphering these spaces and understanding their inherent meanings; on the physical level a topographical analysis is revelatory (see section Methods). Does the observation and analysis provide indications on how these spaces can be treated, without destroying or replacing their characteristics? How to moderate their 'richness' in narratives, parallel meanings, their heterogeinity? Is it possible to intervene and at the same time even enhance their qualities? And with regard to design: how can the gained knowledge be linked, reconnected to, reinserted into the physical space in a design? How could these spaces be (physically) configured to conserve their depolarizing effect (compensation space) and make users feel comfortable? How can we give a conrete expression to the underlying meaning of the topos, in order to make it visible? How can the knowledge of the past be conserved and transformed into the present and future, in the con-

text of changed perception (Jane Sörensen, Bremen lecture, April 2013)?

# definitions and terms

#### E

#### event

"Events" can be global or local, real or virtual, can happen in the present or in the past, but they can all exist and come to fruition effective in spatial parameters. They can subscribe to the physical, topographical dimension of spatial parameters (local event: storm — overturned trees ...), or have an effect on what is going on in a space, for example, the movements and social actions of actors in a space or symbolic charges (invisible) — and thus, shape the life-world of the actors. Over time, a space collects an archive of events (vertical time, see André Corboz 2001), layers and deposits take shape. Events, that take place in a spatial parameter and last for a certain period of time (→ timescape) may, according to importance, eventually become part of the archive — as an invisible entry (history) or they inscribe themselves visibly into the physical space and after a while might fade into the hidden.

# L

#### lifeworld

"Lifeworld" is the state of affairs in which the world is experienced. (phenomenological concept, Husserl 1973; Merleau-Ponty 1962 und Patočka 1998; Bourdieu (habitus) 1979; Lefebvre (everyday-life) 1992; de Certeau (everyday-life) 1998) (Iris Aravot, GIF application) Edmund Husserl, The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology, 1970: "[The life-world] is the spatio-temporal world of things as we experience them in our pre- and extra-scientific life and as we know them to be experienced." Alfred Schütz, Structures of the Life-World, 1973: "The life-world is not my private world nor your private world, nor yours and mine added together, but rather the world of our common experience."

### Μ

#### minimal intervention

"Minimal interventions" are interventions, or better measures, that liberate/ expose instead of add to, that make possible and do not determine, that catalyze rather than regulate, that make spaces accessible and usable (again).

#### mobilities

The term "mobilities" can be traced to John Urry ("paradigm of mobilities"; Urry 2000 and 2007, Cresswell 2006; Meriiman et al. 2008) back and refers to the movement of people and things, goods and waste, images and messages, technologies and techniques. It studies large scale, as well as local/daily, movements in transportation and communication infrastructures, and their connections with practices of social and cultural mobilities. Mobilities relates to many different needs and desires, from basic survival to systems of belief, and the expression of creativity, shaping a person's perception of self and world, emotions and relations

with others.

(Iris Aravot Gif application)

#### mobilities, embodied

"Embodied mobilities" connect walking and the whole range of wheeled movement with lived space (Henri Lefebvre 1991).

It is suggested that lived space in the in-between-city is related to mobility. Lived and perceived space (ibid.) in the in-between-city can be intentionally created so that dispersed and disconnected places and events are connected into a shared life-world, shaped by the nonterritorial group/social network involved. (Iris Aravot, GIF application)

Question: is this relevant for and how far is this transferable to in-between-spaces, the spaces we are looking at now?

#### mobilities, slow - [shall the phrase 'slow motion' be used here?]

"Slow mobilities" includes all forms of transportation, from walking and running to skating, cycling, or riding a scooter that results from one's own muscle power. Slow mobilities come to fruition in the constitution of space in two ways: on the (inter-subjective) life-world level and on the physical plane, because changes in (collective) motion can alter space structurally, change its topography.

#### Ν

#### narrability

"Narrability" defined as an inter-subjective life-world, enhanced and experienced through mobility (a narrative consolidated through mobility). It is a distinct experience by an individual (actor) of a real place, through actual movement on foot, bicycle, motorcycle, car, etc., interwoven with images, memories and narratives of a group or a social network from other spaces and time-periods, not necessarily contiguous with present space and time. (Iris Aravot, DFG-Antrag) Narrabilities are constituted and experienced by – therefore, "tied to" - an individual. (→ mobilities, → narrative)

#### narrative

"Narrative" (narrativus Lat. = "telling a story") is the charging of a certain place with stories that are socio-cultural, historical, and ecological in nature

\* Could there be something like "narrative scapes"?

#### 0

open space

## S

#### site

A "site" is a concentration inside a "texture" of space. It represents the connection between space related practices and the architectural and cartographical ways of thinking." (Sörensen) "The site, etymologically speaking, means the tip of the spear. Everything merges together at the tip, the site draws towards itself ... The site is an intersection. The lines which cross and the things that are collected give the sense of a site."

Peter Arlt

### Т

#### timespace

"Time-Space" describes a current situation, a situation at a certain moment in a specific spatial, socio-cultural configuration. It is limited in time, and bound to a place. Despite its volatility, it can be inscribed in the place and lend it a (permanent) new layer of meaning (archive; vertical time, see Corboz 2001, → narrative) as well as be visible in the physical world (sediment). (Iris Aravot 2011; Iris Aravot / Osnat Rosen-Kremer 2013)

\* What constitutes timespaces? What constellations favor timespaces? Can patterns be detected?

#### transit space, concept of

#### undefined

U

"Undefined" (uncertain, the third, in between, in-between spaces) is a quality that describes spaces and places that do not fall under familiar spatial categories and cannot be defined by a specific function. They can still be very rich, contain a secret wealth of stories (→ narratives), could have once been "occupied," or programmed, but their current use and purpose and meaning is unclear. They offer a great openness and for this reason, and due to its wealth of history and stories, they form a space of possibilities, which leaves much room for social, random, spontaneous activities and occurences. Their lack of spatial identity can make them become non-places, where design and planning interventions are necessary to make them accessible and useable (again) (→ minimal interventions). "Undefined" also however refers to intermediate spaces that can open up in an occupied space with clearly defined function (programmed space) and in a dense network of rules and set tasks, unusual, unplanned and spontaneous activities can occur. (Chr.Sörensen)

## Ζ

### Zwischenstadt

(Thomas Sieverts 1997)

# methods

The methodological approach is transdisciplinary: first, the physical space should be liberated by means of the methods of the concept "Topographic Thinking and Designing" (that is, mapping, transfer of (historic) topographic features to another material (transformation), video / transcription, experience, narration; reference project: Malkastenpark , Dusseldorf). Thus, exposing layers of (hidden) meaning (narratives). (Jane Sörensen) On the other hand, a phenomenological research approach should examine the non-visible, that, which occurs or has occurred in the space ("the social"), and make it available / evaluable. (Iris Aravot) The aim is to take us beyond the visible built environment of a space and its present image, in order to be first identify the multilayered richness of the space (the narrabilities, narrative, and mobilities as well as past physical / topological textures). And ultimately to understand its (hidden) dynamics, recognize potential, and potentially arrive at new design perspectives based on this knowledge.

#### **Iris Aravot**

Phenomenological studies of the person-environment relationship;
phenomenology as a theory of architecture and urbanism;
interest in marginal situations in cities, and in in-between cities and the spontaneous creation of mircostructures of lifeworlds

The researcher's imersion (to a variable degree) is central to the phenomenological approach - investigating "the essential", the invariant, to come to generalizable qualities and patterns that arise from everyday human life and experience, i.e. qualities of the built environment that contribute to a sense of place (vgl. David Seamon 2001) -, characterizing the following, suggested methods (GIF application):

participant observation (Garfinkel 2002)
in-depth interviewing (Holstein & Gubrium 1995; Seidman 1998)
associated props analysis (Harper 2002)
go-along ethnography (Kusenbach 2003) of participants of the network

The research combines methods and research tools from urban and landscape architecture research, geomatics, cultural geography, ethnography of communication and intercultural communication. As such it consists of all five basic types of triangulation: data, investigator, theory, methodological and interdisciplinary (Janesick 1994). (Iris Aravot GIF application)

#### Chr.Sörensen Topographic Thinking and Designing

Topographic Thinking and Designing, which makes a differentiation between nature spaces, cultural landscapes, and urban topographies, is a research and design method that integrates different aesthetic practices in space. The approach comprises making visible the potentials of nature spaces, the revival of cultural landscapes and the developing of new concepts in the lasting cooperation of architecture, city, and landscape.

The main focus is the category of the "site" in between spatial reality and imaginary mental topographies. Topography as a term refers to the description of a place or the art of memorizing and storing its characteristics. The act of topographic thinking and designing requires the interaction with dynamic processes in space and time as well as the awareness of complex interrelations in space.

Viewed topographically, every cultural landscape appears as an archive of experiences and concepts that reflect the handling of sites and open space (palimpsest - André Corboz 2001; Henri Lefebvre 1991).

Based on the system of culture landscapes, created either naturally or artificially, questions like the one of the relationship between place and act or between place and transformation are raised. A site is a concentration inside a "texture" of space. It represents the connection between space related practices and the architectural and cartographical ways of thinking. In the process of documenting the meanings, which can cause a paradigm change, become evident.

### Analysis of a site:

1. historic inventory / observation / etc.,

2. search for an adequate, non-verbal form for documentation,

 materialization of the "findings" (models, photos, plans, maps ...) (visualization), resulting in a transformation of the site-inherent information (narratives, topographical features) Possible techniques of materialization: mapping, video, hand-crafted objects (transfer of (historic) topographic features, narratives to another material), etc.

#### Further methods:

#### Self-narrated walk

a method that brings forth complex personal descriptions (for instance by intermingling personal memories), and results in deeper understandings into how places are experienced by the users, providing insights into the ways individuals access, connect, and interact with places (perception of a site); walking through a (urban) landscape allows for different

perspectives of seeing and feeling in order to increase sensitivity to processes, structures, scenarios and narratives (Foxley 2010, in: Sandra Costa 2013)

#### Strollology

method for analyzing and assessing urban landscape by concentrated perception while moving through space; method invented by Lucius Burckhardt in the 1980s (Ritter and Schmitz 2006); meanwhile a diverse spectrum of formats has developed (s. self-narrated walk), the concentrated, conscious perception of the environment to gain insights into a space, however, is key; also different forms of mobility (for instance the car - cruising) are considered

#### Questionaires

way to address and actively involve for instance current users of the specific space into the research (the method Semantic Differential (based on Charles E. Osgood 1957 and 1975), a sort of rating scale designed to measure the connotative meaning of objects, events, or concepts by locating one's subjective attitude between bipolar adjectives might be useful in this research context) (Heike Kaiser 2012)

#### Historical Comparative Study

"Historical comparative approaches may give indications of a potential direction [for a specific design project]. Looking back at history is one way to learn and understand earlier processes and the options for the designer within these processes." (Annegreth Dietze-Schirdewahn 2013)

### "Inspiring" approaches and strategies

#### Meanwhile Spaces,

Sarah Milliken (2013)

Def.: meanwhile spaces are explicitly and intentionally time-limited in nature temporary appropriation of vacant land; tool that can be used to inform the design of vacant land [undefined spaces], providing an opportunity for testing the cheographic potential of planned "permanent" spaces

→ valuable strategy to gain insight into appropriate, careful and preserving interventions into undefined spaces?

#### **Exploratory Design Approach**

exploration of a site as a material and conceptual space; documentation of site-specific experience and performance

The paper (presented at the ECLAS Conference 2013, Isun (Aisan) Kazerani and Heike Rahmann) presents a design approach that focuses "on the exploration of a site as a material and conceptual space. In such works, site goes beyond its locale or boundaries, rather a dynamic relational construct, which is physically specific, but spatially and temporally expan-

sive (Braae & Diedrich 2012). The spatial (built and unbuilt precondition) and conceptual (cultural, historical and ecological) complexities of a design project need to be experienced in relation to its existing status as well as the larger system to create a dialogue between the site's past, present and future status (Burns & Kahn 2005)." The authors suggest that "with the focus on the development of experiential qualities, this concept could provide a valuable contribution to the design process." reference project: Ballast Point Park, Sydney, design by McGregorCoxall and Choi Ropiha (2010)

→ the design of the park is an inspiring example for the translation of cultural, historical, and environmental narritives of the site into a spatial design

#### Interventions

Elena Montanari (2007) investigates in her paper presented at the PLiC Conference 2007 "the strategies developed in recent years to turn these empty spaces [unsolved and unplanned areas in the in-between city} – empty of functional meaning, sense, life – into precious opportunities that can contribute to the redefinition of a new urban quality for the Zwischenstadt." She considers refering "to them as In-Between-Spaces, because they are inbetween sense/non-sense, use/abandonment [...] in suspense, waiting for a solution. These areas represent a pause in the physical, social, and cultural fabric of the City." She discusses differnt strategies of reappropriation and animation "that do(es)n't intend to modify or violate the natural character of the area, but try to attribute a more stable and recognizable identity. The projects operate on the spatial structure by superimposing a new ordered system to the context; but this operation is not intended to deny the original features of the place, that often constitute the inspiring elements from which the plannng is derived."

 $\rightarrow$  strategies described in the paper valuable in the context of undefined, in-between spaces?

#### Artistic-theoretical approach

Annett Zinsmeister works with places of transition, whose past has a strong impact on history and whose future is uncertain; search for evidence in different cities and studies about spatial urban change are an attempt to get on track of the particular, the specific, the identity of spaces, places, cities; she also thematizes the shift from the real to the virtual space and their interrelatedness; research through mapping, photography, recording, etc., first step in her artistic investigation of space

 $\rightarrow$  what are her findings?

site-writing, critical spatial practice Jane Rendell localisation

# LUISENSTADT, BERLIN



Germany Berlin and its bordering states and countries



Berlin Rings of city development, border and water scapes

2014

Actual Municipality Border

1945-1990

Division of the City, The Berlin Wall separating East Berlin (DDR) and West Berlin (BRD)

1919

Extension of Stralauer Viertel; Friedrichsvorstadt; Schöneberger Vorstadt; Moabit; Wedding

1861

Extension of Stralauer Viertel and Luisenstadt; Construction of Tempelhofer Vorstadt; Schöneberger Vorstadt; Friedrichsvorstadt; Tiergartenvorstadt; Moabit; Wedding; Gesundbrunnen; Oranienburger Vorstadt; Rosenthaler Vorstadt;

1760

Construction of Friedrich-Wilhelm Stadt; Spandauer Viertel; Stralauerviertel; Luisenstadt; Neukölln; Friedrichstadt; Friedrichswerder; Dorotheenstadt

1650

Foundation and Development of the "Doppelstadt" Berlin-Kölln at the River Spree



Berlin 2013

The area of the former Luisenstadt and its former central Canal define a strong, formal element within the City structure - a thin strip of open space within the dense urban void of Kreuzberg



The Luisenstadt and its Canal today

The former Canal today generates an open Space within the dense urban void and formulates the administrative Borderline between the districts of Mitte and Kreuzberg



Berlin and its Extensions, Plan 1826

The Luisenstadt was one as the early and major City extension in the East of the old Inner City . It was planned as a classical and geometrical grid of orthogonal streets stretched out until the former Customs Border of Berlin. Its first design shows the Canal in the middle of the grid as a straight line connecting the River Spree in the North and the Landwehr-Canal in the South.

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Luisenstadt, Sketch by King Friedrich Wilhelm III, 19. Century

The formal definition of the Luisenstadt was of strong interest to the ruling King, with its sketch he defined its future structure of avenues, squares and centred and accessible by the Luisenstadt - Canal.



Luisenstadt and Luisenstädtischer Kanal, Plan 1842

The final design for the Luisenstadt and its Canal was made by the landscape Architect J.P. Lenné, who was also in charge for the Tiergarten and the Garden of Sanssouci in Potsdam. The Canal as its central infra structural element connects the Spree River in the North and the Landwehr Canal in the South. It guarantied the transportation of construction material to built up the Luisenstadt.



View over the Engelbecken, Photography, 1900

The Canal is accompanied by classical designed and differently shaped squares and continuous row of Linden Trees. Besides its function as an infrastructual element the canal and its basins opened up interesting views within the districts.



Redesign of the Canal, Plan, 1929

Since the base slope of the Canal was to little and the water stream was to slow, the Canal began to silt up and to stink . it was seen as a source for mosquitos and therefor as a source for diseases. It was decided to fill the canal up and to design its area as a sequence of lush gardens and squares.



Design of the Engelbecken by Erwin Barth, 1929

Erwin Barth was inspired by the lower niveau of the Canal and designed the Gardens and playgrounds as sunken Gardens 1,60 meters beneath the street level. He kept the basin of the Engelbecken and transformed it into a fish pond which was also used for ice skating in winter times.



Luisenstadt as Borderland

In 1945 the northern and western parts of the Luisenstadt were destroyed during a heavy bombardment. The rubble and wreckage of the destroyed house was used to fill up the Canal Gardens.

From the 1950s on the destroyed areas of the Luisenstadt were reconstructed - based on the Model of the "gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt" - a loose structure of lightweight linear blocks, or Zeilenbau

In 1961 the Berlin Wall was constructed. Its building followed the border between the districts of Mitte and Kreuzberg and partly the course of the former Canal.



Luisenstadt as Borderland - East Berlin

The Canal was totally flattened and became part of the border zone - a lost - wide, sandy and empty stripe of land - which was forbidden to come close to or to enter for people in East Berlin.



Luisenstadt as Borderland - West Berlin

The undefined marginal areas along the border stripe in West Berlin attracted informal settlements and alternative lifestyles.


Luisenstadt as Borderland - West Berlin

The municipality of Kreuzberg developed special strategies for the revitalization of the Luisenstadt which involved the inhabitants in the planning processes and in construction of the new open spaces.



Luisenstadt as Borderland - West Berlin

The International Building Exhibition (IBA), 1984, was focussed on Kreuzberg and a sensitive renovation and reconstruction of the district as lively neighbourhood for living. The Architect Hinrich Baller redesigned the southern parts of the Canal (Wassertorplatz) in an organic, almost natural appearing style.



Luisenstadt as Borderland - West Berlin

The former straight lines of the Canal where transfomed in a soft hilly and very lush park. New bridges were spanning over the soft topography, tress were added and organic shaped pond was the only element remembering the former use and existence of the canal.



The Canal of the Luisenstadt 2013

- \*1 Spree \*2 - St. Thomas \*3 - St. Michael \*4 - Engelbecken
  - \*5 Oranienplatz
- \*6 Wassertorplatz
- \*7 Landwehr Kanal, Urbanhafen



The Canal of the Luisenstadt 2013

The Canal - the former water and live line of the Luisenstadt - forms nowadays a heterogenic sequences of open spaces of different characters and origins. In the former eastern part of Berlin the canal, the basin of the Engelbecken and its surrounding gardens have been reconstructed as a park stripe - based on historic plan and drawings with additional modern elements like playgrounds. The former western part of the canal still transports the natural form language of the eighties.

The Canal still forma a strong element in the urban void of Berlin, but is not readable as a continuous object.

localisation

# MUSRARA, JERUSALEM



Israel Jerusalem and Israels bordering countries



#### Oldtown since 1100 BCE

#### 1923-48

City Boundary under British Mandate The formal objective of the League of Nations Mandate system was to administer parts of the defunct Ottoman Empire, which had been in control of the Middle East since the 16th century, "until such time as they are able to stand alone."[5]

#### 1949 - The Greenline

Green Line refers to the demarcation lines set out in the 1949 Armistice Agreements between Israel and its neighbours (Egypt, Jordan, Lebanon and Syria) after the 1948 Arab-Israeli War. The name derives from the green ink used to draw the line on the map while the talks were going on. (www.wikipedia.com)

#### 1948-67

The partitioned Jerusalem, the city was divided between Israel and Jordan. Israel made western Jerusalem its capital; Jordan occupied the eastern section.

#### since 1967

In 1967, during the Six-Day War, Israel incorporated East Jerusalem together with areas of the West Bank to the north and south into Jerusalem's new municipal boundaries.

#### West Bank Barrier

Is a security and separation barrier under construction by the State of Israel along and within the West Bank.







1948 - 67









### prospects

Associative valorization (Chr. Sörensen)

Layers of the past

Bring the archive of a place to life

"In fact, there is no perception which is not full of memories. With the immediate and present data of our senses we mingle a thousand details out of our past experience." (Henri Bergson 2007, p. 24)

Plans, maps, designs are representations of a space

Against covering up, against overwriting

Overwriting negates history – a place is detached from its history and memory, something is (deliberately) lost (Nina Valerie Kolowratnik 2011)

What could "urban nature" be, which space (of possibilities) can it provide, what can take place there?

The urban is transient, ephemeral, "urban moments" "We need a new vocabulary for describing the urban – confronted with the current developments we are analphabets." (Christian Schmid)

 $\rightarrow$  This is how Iris Aravot's commitment to the term "narrabilities" can be interpreted.

,Narrability' as a strategy for physical and interdisciplinary planning intervention?

Could there be something like "narrative scapes"? Can follies be associated with them?

Does despecifying (deprogramming) lead to the opening of spaces, does this create spaces of possibilities, open spaces?

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