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Opinion

The Ambiguities of "Sustainable" Berlin

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Abstract: City marketing has a strong tradition in Berlin, with two organizations, Berlin Partner and Visit Berlin, responsible for designing and implementing relevant strategies. Sustainability has been on and off the city marketing agenda, almost exclusively in its environmental dimension. In this article, we examine the current representations of Berlin as a "sustainable city" in the official city marketing strategies. We look at how sustainability is used and instrumentalized to create a specific city profile and also to attract particular target groups in tourism. We propose an analysis of sustainable planning in Berlin since reunification to show how it has moved into different directions over time and how this has (or has not) been followed by city marketing. In this endeavor, we move between the existing, and as we argue deeper and more sophisticated, environmental planning of the city on one hand, and the reductions and simplifications of city marketing representations on the other. Finally, we argue that there are inherent contradictions in marketing a sustainable city, where both in terms of tourism and economic development, the concept of growth seems to be reaching environmental limits.

Keywords: Berlin; city marketing; sustainability; green city; smart city; urban development; destination marketing

1. Introduction

"Berliners love to 'go green'. Urban farming, green fashion and vegan gastronomy are turning the former industrial city of Berlin into an ever-increasing green metropolis. Change is driven by a desire to preserve and expand green oases, coupled with the willingness to follow sustainable and alternative paths" [1].

This is how visitBerlin, Berlin's DMO, introduces "trends in sustainability" on its website, a topic that is then expanded and developed over several subthemes. However, here they are operationalized in a marketing context that intends to communicate what is perceived to be a dominant trend in Berlin urban development? However, is it really so? Is "sustainability" a feature of Berlin, and if so, which of its many aspects?

At the beginning of 2020, the Berlin Senate (the state government) adopted a "Berlin Green City Charter" [2] in which it formulates the objectives, tasks and measures necessary to protect, strengthen and develop the "green city", as in Berlin with a rapidly growing population, the land is becoming scarce. To put things in perspective: in ten years, from 2009 to 2019, the population of the German capital has grown by more than 200,000 inhabitants, after two decades of virtual stagnation—from 3,440,000 inhabitants in 2009 to 3,670,000 at the end of 2019.

With the Charter, an action program for Berlin as a green city for 2030 was adopted. The action program contains specific projects, measures, and instruments to meet the challenges formulated in the document and to achieve its objectives. It is, however, only part of a broader environmental strategy that Berlin has been pursuing for decades and which includes (among others) programs for energy transition and protection of the urban

landscape. The Berlin Senate is pursuing the long-term goal of making Berlin a climate-neutral city by 2050.

Berlin's climate protection goals are anchored in the "Berlin Energy Transition Act" of 2016 [3], a law that gives the public sector a leading role in the field of climate protection. This is reflected, among other things, in a timeline for the renovation of public buildings and a master plan for a CO_2-neutral administration.

The "Berlin Energy and Climate Protection Program 2030" (BEK 2030) contains concrete strategies and measures on the way to climate neutrality. It is thus the "timetable" and central instrument of Berlin's climate and energy protection policy. Its approximately 100 measures represent the diversity of climate policy in Berlin and address both climate protection and adaptation to the unavoidable consequences of climate change [4].

Indeed, Berlin is shaped by green spaces like few other metropolises in Europe. From the 881 km^2 of the total surface of the city-state of Berlin (land), open spaces and green areas account for almost 44%. This is an important basis for the attractiveness of the German capital and its high-quality of life. The "Berlin Urban Landscape Strategy" of 2011 aims to secure this "substance" in a growing city and to develop it as far as possible [5].

While Berlin's public policies have been sensitive to the environment for several years, the relative strength of the Die Grünen party being symptomatic of this, both the intensity and the meaning of this sensitivity have evolved over the years.

"Green" and "sustainable" are, of course, not recent buzzwords but have been floating about for decades. Nor are "green" and "sustainable" synonyms, although they are increasingly used interchangeably. We use the term sustainability to refer to "the persistence over an apparently indefinite future of certain necessary and desired characteristics of both the ecosystem and the human subsystem within" [6] (p. 9). As definitions vary greatly, we follow White, who, after analyzing 103 definitions of sustainability, identifies the words associated with the term [7]. According to this analysis, "environment", "social", and "economic" are the three most frequent words in definitions of sustainability. These are also the three dimensions of sustainability that we will be using in this paper. In doing so, we follow the use of the term in Berlin's official development strategy [8].

Following the logic already proposed by Lucarelli et al. [9], we consider place branding and spatial planning together, an aspect that is underrepresented in literature. We examine both the strategies for sustainability in Berlin and the city marketing strategies that support it over several decades. Our aim is to show how such policies have been involved over time and the changing connection between sustainable urban planning on one hand and marketing Berlin as a sustainable city on the other. Our opinion piece is based solely on an analysis of official documents and websites. As we will show, although sustainability has only recently entered the official city marketing vocabulary explicitly, it can be traced back to place branding strategies since reunification. Claire Colomb's "Staging the New Berlin" [10] is the most complete account of city marketing policies in Berlin up to date but ends in 2011. "Sustainability", "environment," or "green planning" are conspicuously absent in Colomb's account. This is, we claim, not an omission by the author, but the reflection of how city marketing was implemented at the time, where sustainability, if at all, was only referred to indirectly. Almost a decade has passed since then, and two new governments have followed, which, as we shall show below, moved urban politics in different directions. "Sustainability" is now center stage, conspicuously, however, only in tourism management.

In the following section of the paper, we explore place marketing and place branding in general and in the context of Berlin. We then trace this development since reunification to show how sustainability has been constantly on and off the agenda. Here, we follow the political, legislative periods, as they mark changes in the development of policies, planning instruments and up to a certain degree. Broadly speaking, these phases are (1) 1990 to 2001 (the period when the CDU, the Christian Democratic Party, governed with its ally the SPD, the Social Democratic Party); (2) 2001–2011 (two periods of the so-called Red–Red coalition between SPD and PDS, Democratic Socialism Party, which is renamed

DIE LINKE after 2007); (3) 2011–2016 (center-right SPD/CDU coalition); (4) 2016 to the present day (red–red–green or SPD–Die Linke–Bündnis 90/Die Grünen). Before bringing the paper to a close, we assess the latest developments and the presence of environmental sustainability in destination marketing. We finally attempt to draw some conclusions to show the inherent problems of city marketing as a strategy that tends to homogenize places and sweep over differences, thus reproducing urban inequalities.

2. "Selling" Berlin

Approaches to place marketing and place branding range from categorical rejection that perceives them "as a form of selling out the city's spirit and soul" on the one end all the way to "plainly commercial, business-style and superficial accounts that uncritically embraced city branding in a wider capitalist logic of 'marketisation'" [11] (p. 25). The distinction between place marketing and place branding (and also place promotion) is not always straightforward, and as we will argue here, not very important in practice. For this reason, and without going into detail, in this text, we use city marketing and city branding interchangeably. If we did wish to distinguish, however, we would use place marketing as "[a]pplying principles of corporate identity to places with logos, straplines, messages and promotional campaigns" and place branding with references to place reputation "within which marketing communications operate" [12] (p. 26). In a similar vein, "[p]lace marketing must be understood in a market context and refers to the competition among places to attract tourists, talent or investment" whereas city branding refers to "the strategic approach to improve a place's image"[13] (p. 289). Both Warnaby and Medway [14] and Kavaratzis and Kalandides [15] question the weak conceptualization of place in place branding and place marketing.

Researchers do not always agree on the above distinctions. For example, for Skinner, place marketing refers to "a place's overall management" that "can be managed as akin to a corporation", whereas place branding relates "to the creation of a corporate brand identity" and links to "a place's promotional activities, contextualized in the domain of marketing communications, marking the place with a distinct identity in the minds of the various target groups" [16] (pp. 924–925). Boisen et al. go a step further to distinguish between place promotion (that communicates offerings), place marketing (that manages supply and demand) and place branding (that manages reputation) [17]. We claim, and we will show in the case of Berlin, that although the distinction may hold conceptually, in the practice of city marketing/branding/promotion, all three aspects co-exist simultaneously, albeit in different variations.

The literature on place branding and sustainability mostly focuses on "environmental" or "green" place branding [18–20], occasionally on "smart growth" [21,22] and "environmental sustainability" in the marketing of sports events [23]. Some authors have considered the role of place branding in promoting sustainable practices among the businesses they seek to attract [24]. However, the main area where sustainability is considered is in tourism (and destination) branding [25,26]. Hanna et al. [27] conclude that consumers (i.e., visitors) reject overt marketing discourses on sustainability and recommend embedding sustainable practices in the organizational logic of the tourist product itself rather than in the message. However, what is conspicuous in the above literature is the absence of other aspects of sustainability (social, cultural, economic) from most considerations (see also Techarungroj et al. on the same subject [28]).

The State of Berlin has two city marketing agencies, each one with a different goal: visitBerlin promotes Berlin as a tourist destination whereas Berlin Partner promotes the city-state as a business location. Both organizations are similar in size (ca. 200 staff), both receive public and private funding, and both are active in fields other than marketing in the narrow sense, offering place management and business support services.

VisitBerlin (since 2011, officially Berlin Tourismus and Kongress GmbH) has three main fields of action: it promotes Berlin as a tourism destination, markets Berlin as a location for conventions and events, and sells tourism services. It was founded in 1993

as Berlin Tourismus Marketing GmbH (Berlin tourism marketing) and was supported from the start by the Berlin hotel business. More recently, and following the official strategy "Tourism Framework 2018+", visitBerlin has made attempts to include tourism management in its core business as a DMO (see Kalandides on a detailed discussion of the Framework and the move from Destination Marketing to Place Management [29]).

Berlin Partner für Wirtschaft und Technologie GmbH (Berlin partner) is a public–private partnership founded to promote business and technology in the State of Berlin. The company is funded by the State of Berlin, chambers of commerce, associations and private companies. As part of its location marketing activities, the company is responsible for the international capital city campaign "Be Berlin" [30]. Berlin Partner informs companies and investors about funding opportunities, advises on the search for a suitable location or qualified personnel and networks with cooperation partners from the scientific community. The company was founded in 1994 as "Partner für Berlin Gesellschaft für Hauptstadt Marketing mbH" (Partners for Berlin, Capital City Marketing) to promote Berlin as a business location and has adapted its structure and tasks several times since then. However, one of its main tasks, promoting Berlin as a (business) location remains unchanged ever since.

3. Planning and Marketing the Sustainable Berlin after 1990

3.1. 1990–2001 "Think Big"

The 1990s were marked by the consequences of the fall of the Berlin Wall and the process of integration of the territory of the former GDR into the Federal Republic. As a result, a restructuring of the entire country took place. Berlin, as the new capital, was symbolically and materially the epicenter of these changes. Indeed, it was the decision to move the German capital from Bonn to Berlin in 1991, a process that took up most of the 1990s, that marks this decade: the Bundestag (Parliament) moved into the remodeled Reichstag building; opposite it stands the new Chancellery; and nearby, scattered throughout the central Mitte district, the main ministries, the major political centers and embassies. The Federal Ministry responsible for the construction or reconstruction of the parliamentary buildings publicly boasts about their energy efficiency [31]. The new geography of power is in place. The new dome of the old Reichstag building becomes a synecdoche for a new Berlin and a new Germany, used as central imagery in brochures by Berlin Partner. Rich in symbolism, it stands for the new and the old, continuation and rupture, democracy and openness, architectural quality, and sustainable technology. This is the first time after reunification that technological, environmental sustainability is given such a prominent position on the agenda of both city and nation branding.

The new spatial development plan (Flächenutzungsplan or FNP), which was drawn up in a very short space of time to reflect the expected development changes in the city, was adopted by the state parliament in 1994. Its main provisions were the restriction of further development within the city in order to avoid urban sprawl, the strengthening of housing in the city center, the protection of green spaces (parks, gardens and woods), the consolidation of the polycentric structure of the city beyond the two main centers of East and West Berlin, the establishment of areas reserved for possible future industrial use (bearing in mind that the city lost 80% of its industrial jobs between 1990 and 1994, mainly in the eastern part), and more. The foundations for the sustainable development of the city-state are already to be found here.

The construction of Potsdamer Platz was probably the most emblematic project of the 1990s, although its importance in architectural terms today is debatable. A large area of about seven hectares adjacent to the Berlin Wall was sold to large developers associated with industrial conglomerates: Daimler–Benz, Sony, ABB. A new master plan, drawn up by architect Renzo Piano, defined the main contours of the project: high-density, mixed-use with an emphasis on commercial and office space, large entertainment complexes (cinemas, theatre, casino) and star architects. Again, the environmental sustainability of the whole project—buildings and area—features prominently in the official marketing for the site.

A concerted urban branding strategy now reaches hitherto unknown dimensions with high professionalism, symbolized by the founding of the Holding Partner für Berlin in 1994. "The New Berlin" (das Neue Berlin) became the motto of the new era—simple and yet almost messianic in its promise. The diverse projects of reconstruction were grouped together and accompanied by a new narrative: the city rising from its ashes, the new capital of Europe, the bridge between East and West. "Berlin, the liveable city"—an indirect reference to sustainability—was one of the pillars upon which this marketing strategy was based. Large projects require large gestures. Here, the term *city branding* seems more appropriate than city marketing or city promotion, as "The New Berlin" in itself does not try to promote and sell anything particular to anybody in particular. What it does is to create a reputation, a mental image of "newness" in the minds of a vague and undefined audience. Just like the images of the Reichstag dome, it produces a broader context, a backdrop against which more concrete place marketing and place promotion can happen.

However, far from the great urban gestures and glitter, the city's economy was faltering. The city's industrial base collapsed both in the east, with the closure of most of the factories, and in the west with the end of the state subsidies, which had kept West Berlin alive for decades. The loss of productive activities and the huge investment in infrastructure pushed the city's finances to a breaking point. By the mid-1990s, the public debt of the city-Land reached 60 billion euros. When the global Internet bubble burst in 1998–1999, Berlin was hit hard. It is hard to communicate economic or social sustainability where there is not any.

The 1990s were also marked by major projects for the reconstruction and rehabilitation of entire neighborhoods, both in the city center and on its outskirts. Sustainability was given a low priority, as "growth" became the main watchword of the period. Only the Master Plan (FNP) defines the limits of construction and the protection of green spaces. However, the "green city" is part of the story of the new Berlin and is seen as a competitive advantage to attract investors and tourists. Based on the experiments in "gentle rehabilitation" of buildings from the 1980s, new buildings are being built with energy optimization in mind. In addition, for the large wastelands in the city center taken over by large projects, new alternative green spaces are created, which will then be transformed into parks (see Park am Gleisdreieck below).

However, with the increase in public debt comes the end of the big projects—but not of the "green city".

3.2. 2001–2011 "Small Is Beautiful": From the Social City to the Creative City

The spending frenzy of the 1990s came to a sudden halt in 2001. A large-scale banking scandal erupted, involving a large part of Berlin's political class, mainly from the conservative party. The city was on the verge of bankruptcy while unemployment soared to almost 20% in 2001.

Under the cumulative pressure of the federal government, the debt and internal tensions in Berlin, the new city-state government launched an unprecedented program of divestments and privatizations: housing, gas, electricity, etc. The new city-state government was able to take advantage of the new situation to create a new city-state. However, the most significant aspect of this privatization frenzy, which will have long-term consequences in Berlin, was the massive sale of social housing to private real estate companies.

The 2001 elections brought the Social Democrats into power, who formed a coalition government with the Die Linke ("The left"), a strong Red–Red coalition that ruled until 2011, after its re-election in 2006. The major concern of the Red–Red coalition led by Klaus Wowereit will be social and economic, and not very environmental. However, it is the urgency of the situation that imposes it. There is a certain historical irony in the fact that it was this left-wing coalition that was to complete the privatization program that the previous government had already launched. Berlin's near-collapse, the stagnation of the population, the lack of foreign investment led to a major change of direction: large-scale

projects were abandoned, and planning began to focus on the local level. This can be seen in two quite distinct strategies: the "social city" program and the "creative city" narrative.

The "socially integrative city" program (Soziale Stadt) was set up by the federal government in the late 1990s to counter the increasing social segregation that was becoming visible in cities [32]. With its main tool, "neighborhood management" (Quartiersmanagment), it was a spatially targeted program that sought to solve social problems at the neighborhood level. By introducing a small-scale governance structure, the "'neighborhood manager", it created an intermediate level between the municipality, citizens and other local actors. In fact, even if the results of this small-scale policy appear to be highly contradictory, as the results diverge from one neighborhood to another, the installation of a "district manager" in the heart of problem areas has made it possible to "stitch up social ties", according to an expression which was fashionable at the time. It provided populations in difficulty with a field contact, who sought to favor social ties and facilitate access to public services for the inhabitants. However, it did not solve the basic problems: a high concentration of segregated immigrant population, unemployment, poverty, delinquency, and petty crime [33].

The second major change has been the abandonment of large-scale foreign investment, which was at the center of economic policy in the 1990s, and a shift towards a new type of small-scale: creative enterprises. This is a period when global interest in the creative economy (creative class, creative industries, creative cities) is growing at a time when the global economy is in a generalized crisis [34,35]. In Berlin, the Ministry of Economics commissioned a series of reports on the cultural and creative industries [36–38] to map this sector in the city and to develop an appropriate industrial policy. This change is accompanied by a demographic shift: Berlin is getting younger and attracting young talent from all over the world. Affordable living and working space, a vibrant cultural life, and an open and hedonistic lifestyle are becoming key elements of urban life, taken up in the form of Berlin's official marketing messages [39]. It was Berlin's mayor himself, Klaus Wowereit, who gave the city its new slogan in 2003: "arm aber sexy" ("poor, but sexy"). This slogan appeals to creative people from all walks of life who are looking for affordable premises and a cool urban atmosphere.

However, not everybody agrees with the way the city develops and the narrative that is woven around it. Citizen protest, which was very present but not very visible for almost two decades, also sees a new resurrection in this period: on 13 July 2008, a referendum was held against the projects of the state government's major investment plan along the River Spree, which went down in history as "Mediaspree". The required number of signatures of support was reached five months earlier than planned and was submitted to the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg district authorities. A clear majority (87%) supported the alternative proposals of the protest initiative ("Mediaspree versenken" or "Sink Mediaspree!"). The referendum was successful in two ways: first, it succeeded in halting the planned development for a while by protecting the open space along the river (although the economic recession at the time may also have been a decisive factor in this respect); and second, it consolidated an important social movement that was to play an important role in the future. The fight over the future of the "creative city" had only just started [40].

Another important landscape project was inaugurated in the same year 2008, the park at Gleisdreieck, a green area of about 26 hectares, located south of Potsdamer Platz on the other side of the Landwehrkanal. This north-south green corridor creates a continuous system of paths from the Natur-Park Südgelände in Schöneberg through the Potsdamer Platz parks to the Tiergarten. Since the 1970s, there have been planning intentions ranging from development to the planning of a motorway. These development plans were opposed—with success—by citizens' initiatives who saw the area as an ideal space for recreation. In 1997, in a recessive context, the state of Berlin decided definitively to dedicate this former wasteland to green spaces and recreation. Citizen protests in Berlin are very often linked to the protection of free, green and recreational spaces.

Thus, at the beginning of the new century in Berlin, the theme of the sustainable city can be broken down into its three aspects: environmental, with the creation of large urban parks; economic, with the in situ creation of creative industries; and social, with the programs of the social city and the quarter management.

In the official city marketing strategy, only the first two find some space: the green city appears as an element in the blend that makes "The perfect city to live in", while the creative city takes center stage.

3.3. 2011–2016: What Remains of the Creative City: The Smart City

In 2011, a new government, formed by an alliance between the Social Democratic Party and the Christian Democrats, comes to power. The new coalition changes the political strategy of its predecessors and focuses on two themes which are also two new keywords: the concept of the "smart city", which emerged from the debate on the creative industries, and the concept of the "sustainable city", which has already been tried and tested elsewhere, become the new urban mantras. In 2015, after several years of elaboration, the new framework for the "smart city" is published, which is intended to be the cornerstone of Berlin's development into a city run by a new IT-based system. The Berlin government gives its own definition of the idea of sustainability: cities are fit for the future if they achieve a significantly higher or stable quality of life with the same or lower use of resources technologies [41]. This could only be achieved, the official documents state, through urban management using innovative information and communication technologies which would link various sources of information and thus enable the creation and use of synergies, which would lead to a significant increase in efficiency and conservation of resources through integrated approaches. This encompasses production processes, services and technologies as well as infrastructures that are integrated, networked, mutually supported and thus only achievable in the first instance through new "intelligent" information and communication (ibid). Public enthusiasm for the smart city has clearly waned since then, as both academic and political criticism of the concept increased [42–44]. On one hand, the influence which huge international conglomerates would have on the city and on private data were considered to be very problematic, while on the other hand, the faith in exaggerated technological optimism weakened.

Moreover, it was during these years that the competition for space became most visible, as Berlin's population was steadily increasing. This competition was not only due to the regained attractiveness of the German capital. It was also a consequence of the global financial crisis of 2007–2008 when investing in real estate became one of the few havens for capital accumulated in industry or business. At the end of the 2000s, Berlin was indeed the last affordable European capital. Rents are very low, and the average purchase price is around € 1200 per square meter (today €3000 per square meter). The city became a real Eldorado for international investors, pension funds, developers and large real estate groups who are buying up tens of thousands of square meters of flats, buildings, offices or wasteland. For its part, the city, still heavily in debt, is in great need of money. Through the public real estate companies it owns, it sells land, public buildings and social housing to the private sector. In this way, a huge transfer of land and real estate from the public to private capital took place in silence. In this respect, the myth of the "sustainable social city" was brutally contradicted by reality. The inhabitants affected by this transfer and the resulting increase in rents will soon realize this [45,46].

The pressure on the city of Berlin to use increasing new land for construction, which was limited by the 1994 spatial development plan, can be seen in some emblematic cases, such as that of the former Tempelhof airport, located south of the city center but within the S-Bahn railway belt, i.e., within the Innenstadt (central part of the conurbation). Due to its noncompliance with international standards and the construction of Berlin Brandenburg International's (BBI) main airport, Tempelhof Airport was closed in 2008. In its place, the "Tempelhofer Feld" (as the land is called) was opened in 2010. It soon became a 355-hectare walking and recreation area covering the entire area of the former airport

(buildings, runways, tarmac, etc.). This leisure area thus becomes the largest open space in the city center, the largest city park in Berlin and one of the largest in Europe.

In September 2011, a citizens' initiative called "100% Tempelhofer Feld" was founded with the aim of blocking the Senate's plans for further use by means of a referendum and preventing any construction on the site. Signatures against this project were collected en masse, forcing the Senate to authorize a referendum. The referendum was held in May 2014 and was successful with a clear majority of votes against any construction on the site and for its preservation as an open space for the population. Berlin's mayor, Klaus Wowereit, had no choice but to accept the result of the ballot.

This citizens' referendum was quickly described as historic not only because of the size of the area involved but also because a majority of Berliners were aware of the vital importance, in a booming city, of green and open spaces in the city. Earlier, in the 1990s, other citizens' initiatives had successfully fought for the preservation of the green lung of the city center, the Tiergarten, threatened on its fringes by the large North-South tunnel project under the park. Through initiatives such as the Tempelhof and Tiergarten, and many other initiatives, albeit less publicized in the media, the population shows its constant attachment to green and open spaces, far removed from official urban plans and incantations to the "green city", the "sustainable city" or the "intelligent city". It also expresses its intention to be involved in the debate on the future of the urban framework.

3.4. After 2016: The Housing Emergency and Sustainability in Destination Marketing

The new coalition between the SPD, the Greens and Die Linke came to power at the end of 2016 and agreed on a common program in the "coalition agreement 2016–2021" in the same year. [47]). Already the subtitle of the report—"For a Berlin that is united, sustainable and open to the world"—is programmatic in the sense that it defines the three main values that govern the entire document. Sustainability is present throughout the text and concerns all aspects of urban development: housing, energy, investment, economy, environment, transport, mobility, tourism, etc. Moreover, it is specifically mentioned in four different sections of the document: Urban development in Berlin—intelligent, sustainable and participatory ("an integrated strategy that integrates social, ecological and economic aspects in a sustainable balance"); An innovative, fair and sustainable economic policy for Berlin ("The coalition is also oriented towards the objectives agreed in the Paris climate agreement. A socially and environmentally responsible economic policy strengthens Berlin's competitiveness"); Berlin—a pioneer in climate protection and energy transition ("The state of Berlin will ambitiously implement its goal of becoming climate neutral by 2050"); Active nature and environmental protection—an ecological new start for Berlin ("For the coalition, sustainability is a cross-cutting task for all policy areas"). At least programmatically, Berlin seems to be committed to sustainable urban development.

However, the greatest challenge in Berlin today is "land competition", i.e., the struggle for long-term land use. Berlin is now a growing city with a population of 3.7 million inhabitants and (before the COVID-19 pandemic) with 14 million tourists per year, making it the third-largest tourist destination in Europe after Paris and London and before Rome, Barcelona, Madrid and Venice (cf. [29]). Housing is becoming increasingly scarce or even unaffordable for large segments of the population. Moreover, although the new Red–Red–Green coalition government has made access to affordable housing one of its central objectives, this process is slow and is taking the social cohesion of the city to its limits. The already fragile balance between sustainable development and growth is becoming increasingly strained. To prevent it from breaking, the Berlin Senate adopted in 2019 the flagship measure carried by Katrin Lompscher, Senator for housing and construction (Die Linke), namely the famous "rent cap". In practice, this is indeed a revolutionary measure since it consists of prohibiting rent increases for five years, or in very modest proportions fixed by law. Although the legal validity of this law, which was immediately challenged by the landlords' unions and developers, has yet to be examined by the Karlsruhe Court of Justice, it is unlikely that the Senate will simply withdraw it, including for electoral reasons (the next municipal

elections will be held in September 2021). Indeed, in a very tense and uncertain economic context, Mietdeckel has increasing supporters among its inhabitants. To a certain extent, it can even be said that the Mietdeckel embodies more than any other regulation the "Berlin of solidarity, social and sustainability" that the ruling coalition had been calling for.

This growing competition on the ground has consolidated the urban social movements which are trying to secure access to certain open buildings and green spaces in the city. Thus—next to Tempelhof or the Spreeufer—other sites such as the "Haus der Statistik", the "Dragonerareal" or the "Mauerpark" (see below) have become areas of dispute or conflict between intensification of investments and the need for accessible spaces to cover economic and social needs as well as relaxation and leisure activities. "Communal gardens" can be conceived as such spaces that both withstand the pressure of construction and respond to a new sense of community. The concept of "productive urban green" (Produktives Stadtgrün) adopted by the Senate combines allotment gardens, urban agriculture and self-sufficiency with the culture of do-it-yourself and an ecologically motivated lifestyle [48].

With around 200 communal gardens in September 2019, Berlin has developed over the last ten years into an important European-wide urban community gardening center. Of course, the allotment gardens of the beginning of the 20th-century are also an early form of urban gardening. Community gardening has given the social significance and public perception of open spaces used for gardening in the city a completely new impetus.

The Allmende-Kontor Intercultural Community Garden at the former Tempelhof Airport, which has been run by more than 500 gardeners since 2011, is a flagship project of this movement. It covers 5000 square meters and enables people without a garden, especially those from socially disadvantaged areas of Neukölln or neighboring districts, to garden together or simply to be outdoors. The Prinzessinnengärten is probably Berlin's most famous urban gardening project. It is a mobile garden on Moritzplatz in the popular Kreuzberg district, which was created in 2009 on the initiative of residents and is managed by the nonprofit association Nomadisch Grün. A former wasteland has been converted into a vegetable garden for urban agriculture. Space is rented annually by the city, and the aim is to convert a wasteland into a place of "productive greenery" as well as a place for joint learning and creation.

Finally, after more than two years of extensive participation processes between the district and Senate administrations, associations and civil society, the "Berlin Green City Charter" was approved by the Senate in early 2020. This document, in the form of a manifesto, aims to preserve and increase the ecological value of the city by developing its green and natural areas. It remains to be seen whether the Charter will become a reality or whether it will remain a pious hope at a time of uncertainty due to the coronavirus, its multiple consequences and the changes in priority it implies.

The Mauerpark is probably the best example of a garden that sums up the history of Berlin's inner city wasteland. Originally a large prewar railway site, then occupied by the Berlin Wall, it has been the subject of controversy for decades. The Mauerpark is wedged between three very distinct districts: on the former western side of the Wall, the Wedding district, with a strong presence of workers' and migrant communities, and on the former eastern side, on one hand, Prenzlauer Berg, perhaps Berlin's most gentrified district, and on the other, the trendy and touristy Mitte district. The Mauerpark (literally the "Wall Park") is thus intensively used by all the different groups represented in the adjacent areas—including tourists—sometimes creating conflicts with local residents. However, the greatest conflict in recent years has been between private dwellings and the garden. Part of the area has been sold to private developers who have built new high-end (and some affordable) housing complexes. Attempts to mobilize citizens and involve them in the decision-making process were aborted when the Senate and the developers quickly agreed that construction of these new housing units on the edge of the park should begin. Today, they have been built, but most of the Mauerpark remains a carefully landscaped park that still welcomes all the different local communities and increasing tourists.

Sustainability is present more than ever in the tourism marketing for Berlin. The visitBerlin site dedicates a full section on sustainable tourism. The word "sustainable" (nachhaltig) features prominently on the site [49] but translates as "green" in English: "Green Berlin. Capital of green trends: How Berlin leads the way in urban sustainability" [50].

There are several subsections that develop the idea: "The capital of green trends" proposes "sustainable city tours" and puts forward "smart city"-era catchword of "electromobility"; "Sustainable food trends" includes indoor farms, aquaponics, zero waste, slow food, organic produce and farmer markets; "Conscious shopping" is about vegan products, upcycling outlets and sustainable fashion brands; "Green urban projects" features permaculture, guerrilla and urban gardening, but also the site of the former Tempelhof airport; "Smart buildings and architecture" links to the "smart city" and the architectural tradition of the past decade, prominently featuring the Reichstag building, but also the EUREF site; "Social startups" with Berlin "a silicon valley for social innovation" includes both the social and the economic sides of sustainability; and finally "Sustainable sleeping" as well as "Sustainable conventions and congresses in Berlin". The above is hardly a coincidence. The Tourism framework developed in 2017 has explicitly recommended highlighting sustainability as one of the leading features of the city [51].

4. Discussion

This quick account of sustainability in Berlin in the last three decades makes one thing clear: a strong presence on the city's planning and marketing agenda can only be found in the last political period after 2016. However, this is also a period where affordable housing shortage becomes more acute, presenting administration with a difficult dilemma when it comes to competition for space: more space for green or more housing? The cases of Tempelhof and Mauerpark above have illustrated this quandary in the most dramatic way. The second thing that can be observed is that sustainability is mostly understood in its environmental dimension, admittedly a general tendency in the whole sustainability discussion. Moreover, whereas Berlin can indeed boast some interesting albeit limited examples of economic (e.g., creative industries) and social (e.g., neighborhood management) sustainability programs, they have hardly been presented as such.

Regarding sustainability in tourism marketing, there are a series of observations to be made:

First, sustainable tourism services (e.g., accommodation and events) is what is to be expected in tourism promotion, in particular for an agency that also sells the services it promotes.

Second, electromobility and technological innovation, through prominent in the visitBerlin pages, is not something that generally attracts the visitor. Here tourism management seems to follow the needs of the electromobility industry rather than those of sustainable urban development. Indeed, despite its many advantages, electromobility has been criticized for several things, both on technical grounds, e.g., for the production of environmentally detrimental batteries and more social aspects, e.g., for not moving away from the automobile-centered model [52]. Tourism marketing by nature cannot enter the nuanced discussion around the advantages and disadvantages of electrical mobility but needs to present an enthusiastic, one-sided account of its many virtues.

Third, the choice of certain sites as visitor attractions, such as the EUREF campus or tech startups, is highly unusual. It can be interpreted as an attempt to brand Berlin both as a technological hub and a sustainable city, rather than market the particular sites. Again here, tourism marketing needs to brush over strong criticism that has been expressed around many of these issues, as, for example, gender bias and inequality in tech startups [53]. One could argue, for example, that this uncritical heroization of tech startups de facto reproduces gender inequality.

Fourth, sustainable fashion is also a highly debatable issue whose branding may or may not entail greenwashing rather than any real change in fashion production, dis-

tribution, and consumption [54]. It is equally debatable whether any kind of fashion consumption can be sustainable in the first place.

Finally, it is equally questionable whether tourism can be sustainable at all or whether it is an unsustainable practice by definition [55].

This list of criticisms could be expanded, as there is a large controversial debate around all the above issues. It is indeed not the job of a DMO to delve into the controversial qualities of every element it promotes. Nor is this a consequence of *bad* city marketing. On the contrary, this is inherent to city marketing as a practice, which needs to tell a coherent story out of a reality that may not be at all consistent. This, however, does not release it from its responsibility of thus reproducing the many problematic aspects of what it promotes, some of which have been mentioned in passing here above.

5. Conclusions

Even if the role of these "trendy and smart" names is to sell dreams, they are far from always corresponding to reality. In this paper, we have shown the interconnections and contradictions between urban planning and place marketing on the topic of sustainability as they have evolved over time in Berlin.

The socio-economic reality of Berlin in 2020 is of a city that is strongly socially segregated between a wealthy and very well-off population on one hand and a growing number of urban poor on the other—an inequality that has been on the rise since the double coronavirus crisis. These called "the new poor" (independent workers and small traders made unemployed by the pandemic, employees, retirees, unemployed young people, etc.) have joined the already large cohort of those living on less than 60% of the median salary (17% in 2019, certainly more in 2021). It is striking how much the rhetoric of Berlin city marketing experts obscures this disturbing reality. In fact, this narrative is not addressed to just anyone. It targets relatively well-off tourists, foreign investors, creatives, startup entrepreneurs and multinational corporations. Such is their clientele: the globalized urban and economic elites. However, even in this very elitist perspective, would it not be possible to develop a narrative not emphasizing sustainability or green, but also the products or even the physical heterogeneity of the city?

The physical reality of Berlin in 2020 is that of a patchwork city that continues to build and grow on the outskirts. A city that is certainly building new eco-neighborhoods, but also new energy-consuming districts devoid of greenery (cf. East Side Quartier around the O2-Arena) in the central part of the city. A city that allows a sea of detached houses to be built on the outskirts (in the direct periphery and now even beyond in the countryside), which always means more asphalt and concrete, impermeable grounds, and long-distances travel by polluting cars. Today, of course, we are building in a more ecological way than yesterday, but this uncontrolled growth of the great outskirts of Berlin is worrying and not very ecological. What is surprising is that few seem to care. As if everything that was being built beyond Berlin's Innenstadt (inner city), outside the technology campuses (Adlershof) and other technology parks (Eberswalde), was stepping out of the radar screens.

Finally, how not to point out a final contradiction: at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic questions air travel altogether, Berlin is inaugurating its long-awaited new BER airport. It is neither green nor sustainable, and it is technically already rather outdated. As the two airports previously in service of Tegel in the North and Schönefeld in the South have just been closed definitively, it is a safe bet, when air traffic resumes, that the BER airport will be congested and that traffic jams (taxis, buses, private cars) will form at its access points. It is not certain that the clientele of marketing agencies, who will use BER airport, will find it very "smart", "sustainable", or "sexy".

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