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Abstract

This contribution intends to study the metropolisation process in Hamburg, taking into account the strong polycentrism of the German economy where several metropolises are competing for international leadership. The public and private actors of the second biggest agglomeration of the country are striving for the rise of the upper economic functions of the city; they are carrying out ambitious urban renewal projects. A focus will be made on the consequences of those transformations on urban forms, and the gentrification process that is occurring at the same time in the city centre, led by the upper middle class and superior services. However, the popular and industrious character of the port town of Hamburg gives rise to original, violent reactions. Several local alternative groups are strongly rejecting the metropolisation process, which they consider to be ill-suited to the working-class identity of Hamburg.

Hamburg; metropolisation; urban projects; gentrification; radical criticism

Zusammenfassung

Hamburg: Paradoxa und widersprüchliche Darstellungen einer Arbeitermetropole

Dieser Beitrag zielt darauf ab, den im Hamburg voranschreitenden Metropolisierungsprozess im Kontext einer stark polyzentralisierten deutschen Wirtschaft zu untersuchen, in welchem mehrere Großstädte im Wettbewerb um internationale Führungspositionen liegen. Sowohl die öffentlichen als auch die privaten Akteure des zweitgrößten deutschen Ballungsraumes setzen sich für den Anstieg von höheren wirtschaftlichen Funktionen in der Stadt stark ein und bringen dazu ehrgeizige Stadterneuerungsprogramme hervor. Hier sollen die Auswirkungen dieser Transformationen auf städtebauliche Formen analysiert werden und der damit zusammenhängende Prozess der Gentrifizierung, also der Rückeroberung der Stadtmitte durch wohlhabendere Bevölkerungsgruppen und gehobene Dienstleistungen. Dennoch verursacht die starke Prägung Hamburgs als Arbeiter- und Hafenstadt besondere und zuweilen gewaltsame Formen der Ablehnung dieser Metropolisierung, da sie einigen alternativen Gruppen vor Ort im Hinblick auf die Arbeiteridentität der Stadt als unangepasst erscheint.

Hamburg; Metropolisierung; städtebauliche Projekte; Gentrifizierung; radikale Kritik

Introduction

The word metropolis, often loosely defined, still remains a controversial concept in geography. The expression, at least, helps identify a big city with internationally significant functions of economic command and control. However, there is neither an official population threshold, nor a fixed list of functions that would help to discriminate between cities to call them metropolises. In fact, the word mostly refers to the *metropolisation* process, a dynamic in which an agglomeration is progressively integrated into the global economy, with growing concentration of exclusive services and key stakeholders and, at the same time, substantial changes in the urban forms that facilitate the development of the new economic functions of the city (Ghorra-Gobin 2015; Di Méo 2010; Vandermotten 2009; Mangin 2009).

Hamburg, a harbour-city with a strong popular tradition, but also the second-largest city in Germany, reaching 1.8 million inhabitants and polarising the upper northern part of the country (Fischer 2008), clearly demonstrates the conflicting dimension of the new urban forms and the contrasting representations of the city against the background of the neo-liberal paradigm of the metropolisation process. The speculative production of urban spaces, intended to reinforce the economic attractiveness of the Hanseatic agglomeration, takes place in a social context that remains characterised by structural precariousness and a strong tradition of political criticism. Uncommon – if not paroxysmal – reactions of resistance therefore occur.

The idea of this contribution was born after very stimulating inputs given in a seminar about the social acceptation of urban changes in Hamburg (refer to Barbier; Vogelpohl; Wischmann 2015). Our aim is therefore to synthesise all those materials by making, in a first section, an assessment of the metropolisation process in Hamburg from an economic and social point of view, before considering in a second section the design and discourses of the bigger urban development projects – which essentially engage in a deep transformation of the image of the city, filtered through the international criteria of economic attractiveness and post-modern aesthetics. In this way, such a strategy faces deeply-rooted criticism on the part of a significant proportion of the urban population. However, the scope and scale of the contestation has to be analysed: is it a simple nostalgic, overemphasised relic of the manufacturing period of the port town, while this popular and industrial trait of the city is actually declining against the irresistible tertiary transformation of Hamburg? Is it, on the contrary, a much deeper expression of a collective identity that has been neglected by the leading players of the metropolisation process? A critical position – closer to the second hypothesis – will be chosen here in our third section, following French (Pinson 2009; Chalas 2000; Jouve a. Lefèvre 1999) and international research (Smith 1996; Harvey 1989) about the metropolitan transformation of cities, in order to better highlight the internal contradiction of the local society in Hamburg.

An unbalanced metropolisation process

One should first of all underline the clear bivalence of Hamburg, a city that has undoubtedly asserted itself as a major economic centre in Germany, but has, at the same time, a popular legacy that is stronger than in other metropolises. In order to measure the economic magnitude and the social outcomes of the metropolisation process that is at play in Hamburg, the most prominent and visible criteria will be summarised here, following the theoretical frameworks of selected former research (Veltz 1996; Leroy 2000; Beaverstock et al. 2000; Roncayolo 2001).

Undeniable functions of economic command

From a strictly demographical point of view, the almost twice millionaire agglomeration of Hamburg is facing a natural decrease, as are most areas of Germany; however, its migratory balance is positive (+5,500 migrants a year), which allows the metropolis to foresee a stabilisation of its population in the long term. This is not the case in the surrounding *Länder*, which will face a 5 % decrease in the number of their inhabitants by 2030, according to the estimates of the Federal Statistical office. On a broader scale, the territorial influence of Hamburg spills over Schleswig-Holstein and Lower Saxony, and allows the city to polarise a metropolitan area (*Metropolregion Hamburg*) that extends towards the East and gathers more than 4 million inhabitants: it is, indeed, the new programming framework that has been retained for the application of some structural funds of the European Union (http://metropolregion.hamburg.de/, 2015).

Hamburg benefits from world-level transportation facilities, ensuring a global connectivity that is needed to claim international recognition. Its harbour, ranking among the 30 busiest spots in the world for the total cargo volume, is now 3rd in Europe and 17th in the world for container traffic, with around 9 Million TEUs (AAPA 2016, *World Ports Ranking*). The port's activities generate directly more than 3,600 full time jobs, but a total of more than 77,000 jobs are indirectly related to the logistics activity of the harbour. Hamburg's hinterland has indeed expanded to the East since the fall of the Iron Curtain, and the metropolis has benefited from the redirection of the land flows of goods from the Baltic area (Rostock, if not Gdańsk) thanks to improved servicing. With its five railway axes, the harbour is the first customer of the *Deutsche Bahn* for freight transport, and the waterway of the river Elbe reaches the Midland Canal, connecting the Rhine region to Berlin and Poland. Finally, the most significant motorway in Germany, the A5/A7 – also called "HaFraBa" – links Hamburg to Frankfurt and Basel in the south. The airport, the fifth largest in Germany, is probably the only weaker infrastructure, hosting no major airline company.

On top of that, the city has significant functions of political and economic command at national and European levels: its status of "free and Hanseatic city" is an advantage in itself, since the metropolis can enjoy political autonomy at the federal level with an administrative power equivalent to

The five main domains of economic command of Hamburg

Aviation and machine construction	Logistics, retailing and distribution industry, distance selling	Banks and insurance, real estate companies	Information and media, digital imaging and videogames	Chemicals, pharmacy, electronics and cosmetics
Airbus Operations (12 500)	Otto Group (8 600)	Haspa bank (the first savings bank in Germany) (5 000)	Gruner+Jahr (2 900)	Beiersdorf, incl. the *Nivea* brand and its R&D unit (4 900)
Lufthansa Germany (9 500)	Edeka-Verbund (incl. *Spar* and *Netto* supermarkets) (5 600)	Signal-Iduna (3 600)	NDR broadcasting company (2 700)	Philips (3 200)
Körber AG (2 700)	Tchibo (2 100)	TK Krankenkasse (3 300)	Bauer Media Group (1 600)	Aurubis (2 300)
Jungheinrich (2 600)	Heinemann (grocery distribution) (1 500)	Ergo (2 800)	Axel Springer group (*Bild*, *Die Welt*) (1 000)	Eurofins (1 200)
Daimler/ Mercedes-Benz (2 600)	Kühne & Nagel (2 800)	Allianz (1 700)	Spiegel Group (900)	NXP Semiconductors (1 200)
Siemens (2 400)	Hapag-Lloyd (container shipping companies) (2 000)	Euler Hermes (1 300)	Olympus Europa (2 500)	Unilever Germany (900)
Still (2 400)		Hansemerkur (1 300)	Goodgame-Altigi (1 200)	Helm AG (chemistry and pharmacology) (700)
Subcontractors in aviation and automotive industry (over 300)		ECE (real estate) (1 300)	Innogames (400)	

Source: Hamburg Chamber of Commerce/Initiative Pro Metropolregion Hamburg, 2018. Year of Data: 2015. In brackets: approximate number of workers in Hamburg.

Tab. 1: The five main domains of economic command of Hamburg

that of a regular Land[1]. Its productive activity is also based on three historical pillars (Weinachter 2007). Aeronautics, with the Airbus Germany site, is the first of them. With more than 12,500 employees, this unit has become the third site in the world for the aviation industry, after Seattle and Toulouse. It is backed by several other factories dedicated to automotive and machine construction. Logistics, secondly, is narrowly related to the harbour with the marine transportation company *Hapag-Lloyd*, ranking fifth in the world for container shipping, but also several important companies for retailing and mass distribution in Germany. Lastly, the banking and insurance sector, with the *Signal-Iduna* group or the savings bank *Haspa* for instance, promotes the city as the second financial hub in Germany, just after Frankfurt and far above Munich or Berlin. The creation of the first German stock exchange, in 1558, and the profitable period as a trading city during the Hanseatic League remain therefore prevalent.

However, two other important domains must complete this picture (refer to Tab. 1). The creative activities related to information, media and digital imaging have gained momentum. Hamburg is the host city for national information groups such as *Axel Springer (Bild* magazine*)*, *Bauer* (*Bravo*, *Closer*) the radio and broadcasting company *NDR* and the weekly news magazines *Stern* (*Gruner+Jahr*), or *Spiegel*. As 70 % of the national newspapers circulation originates from Hamburg, the city was called "the capital of media" and of the record industry, even outranking Berlin (Grésillon 2002). Most of them have now expanded to digital forms. Secondly, high-tech industries related to fine chemistry are also well represented, with some leading groups at international and national levels (*Beiersdof, Helm AG, Unilever Germany*). Hence, German polycentrism in the organisation of upper economic functions is confirmed since the Hanseatic metropolis is actively taking part in the development of high-tech and creative industries in the country.

The very last criteria for defining the metropolitan dimension of Hamburg is a pronounced cosmopolitanism, with the total population comprising 15 % of foreigners (national average: 9.5 %), mainly from Turkey, Afghanistan, Iran and Poland. About 30% of the population is of foreign origin, if all post-1950 entries are taken into account (Statistik Nord 2015).

Poverty and unemployment: the social weakness

The criteria proving a metropolisation process are therefore fulfilled, even though the demographic increase remains limited and the economic production still significantly relies on heavy industry and logistics, rather than on upper tertiary activities. However, the actual social composition of the city shows that 16 % of the population has no vocational training – which is 3 points higher than the national average. The social profile of the metropolis is closer to the Ruhr or the Northern Rhine region than to Munich or Frankfurt. Moreover, though gross average incomes in Hamburg appear to be the highest in the whole country, it is essentially because the limits of the administrative region of Hamburg do not include any rural areas, which are usually poorer.

In fact, social issues are also striking in Hamburg. Unemployment is not particularly low in that city, as it is comparable to the national average (7.6 %). Citizens who benefit from social transfers under the Hartz IV programme (SGB II) account for 10.5% of the population, which is higher than the 7.6 % national average. There is now more poverty in Hamburg than in some former Eastern *Länder* such as Brandenburg, Saxony or Thuringia, whose industrial take-off is more pronounced. What is more, the city-state is experiencing high debt loads at the moment – about 14,000 € per inhabitant

1 Hamburg is therefore qualified a "city-state" in order to express its dual status of municipality and federal state at the same time. The city has its own constitution, its parliamentary assembly – the "Bürgerschaft", its executive body – the "Senate" – and is headed by a "mayor governor", whose rank is comparable to the "minister presidents" of the other Federal states of Germany. This advantage is only shared by Bremen and Berlin.

in 2013 – wich is four times higher than in southern Germany[2].

Granted, the simultaneous presence of powerful economic functions of command and a high proportion of the population experiencing poverty and social problems is not Hamburg-specific. Most global cities such as New York or London also concentrate more and more wealth and poor people at the same time. In the case of Hamburg, the popular trait is probably more salient since there are few spots that visibly display a concentration of wealth – except on the Blankenese hillsides, in the western part of the city – and because the popular base has been maintained as a local culture, inherited from the turbulent working class of the harbour. Some elements of this culture have even been erected as symbols of the city: the *Astra* beer, a popular beverage that came back in favour for both local people and tourists, after a lasting period of decline, thanks to renewed marketing; the *FC Sankt-Pauli* football club, deeply rooted in the anti-fascist workers' movement; and the red district in Sankt-Pauli, located south of the *Reeperbahn*, a recreational avenue built in a functional style in the 1950s – the whole area being dedicated to gambling, bars, night-clubs and brothels. The whole city, actually, is characterized by a red tradition on the political level, since it was continuously under the leadership of the social-democrat party from the end of the war to 2001 – except between 1953 and 1957.

The discursive construction of the metropolis

A selection of discursive constructs, produced by the leading authorities of the city in order to promote a renewed image of Hamburg, will be analysed here in order to understand the tangible expression of the metropolisation process. We will successively consider the slogans of the metropolitan communication strategy, in order to determine the dominant paradigms in its past and current actions, then the operational programmes that have been recently launched. The aim of this section will be, in short, to present an interpretation of the urban forms that have been produced by the most recent urban projects in Hamburg.

The second point will be particularly based on an analytical method developed by Wischmann (2015) in her study about the changes in the Sankt-Pauli district, in which she stated through a discourse analytical investigation, including narrative interviews, the kind of reactions the new urban forms elicited in local inhabitants. Following Foucault's principle under which material forms – here, those of the urban buildings – are part of a discourse, the author will consider them as objects that "carry a meaning as they are interrelated to each other and refer to what will be said about them, either by their position in space, their details or the way one will interpret them" (Wischmann 2015, pp. 62–63).

This analytical model for visual discourses allows one to consider built-up areas with a renewed understanding, nourished by the inhabitants' sayings and practices. Indeed, visual discourses will help evidencing some collective conscience and the way in which urban forms express territorial appropriation (Sack 1986). Considered against the background of their social meaning, urban features – whether buildings, limits, fences or visual barriers – will indeed catalyse legitimation processes, but also contestation.

A gradually built-up strategy

The metropolisation process in Hamburg has been brought about, on the political level, by the "Jump over the Elbe" (*Sprung über die Elbe*), a strategy that was launched by the city in 2002 after the conservative party took over the local government. This slogan expressed the need for an urban renewal, especially in the oldest abandoned port spaces that were located nearest to the city centre, on the other side of the river, in order to turn them into business and recreational areas. This was also an opportunity to work in sensitive neighbourhoods by increasing their density with better-off households, involving the private actors of the real estate sector. This "Jump over the Elbe" is also a matter of image and bears witness to the fact that a new metropolitan dynamism is taking place in Hamburg, with a spatial reconnection of the urban fabric around the city-centre. The city has therefore undergone a real metamorphosis, in the original sense of the term, that is to say a deep change in its identity and material appearance.

However this slogan is, in fact, the outcome of a more lasting evolution that could be symbolically dated back to the 1980s, when Mayor Klaus von Dohnanyi pronounced a famous speech about "Hamburg Ltd" in front of the *Übersee Club* (1983), an association of entrepreneurs (Barbier 2015). Delivered just after the two oil crisis of the 1970s, this speech stated that it was necessary for public actors to commit to supporting the economic activity and promoting the most innovative sectors of the city. Therefore, the touristic image of a "gate to the world" – a romantic representation of the port interface that had been attached to the harbour since the post-war period – was gradually abandoned between the 1980s and the turn of the century. Meanwhile, the city-state adopted a brand new identity as a "growing city" (*Wachsende Stadt*) based on entrepreneurship, innovation but also culture, music and architecture (Amanda a. Grünen 2008).

This change of rhetoric directly expresses the evolution of the urban administrators' culture towards an entrepreneurial management style. Such a sign constitutes, according to Harvey (1989), the first marker of urban gentrification. At first, the word gentrification helped, in its narrower sense, to describe the evolution of the housing market and the upgraded standards of urban forms, producing a more segregationist way of

2 Unless otherwise specified, all statistical data in this contribution are taken from the website of the German Federal statistical office, www.destatis.de (retrieved oct., 2015).

Fig. 1: The Spiegel headquarters, built between 2007 and 2011 by the Henning Larsen Architecture Company (Denmark), are marking the Hafencity renewal area from the railways entering Hamburg at the east of the city-centre (Depraz 2014)

life within city-centres[3]. It is now used to summarise, in a broader sense, a more comprehensive analysis of the city, including the mutation of economic activities, of collective representations and daily practices towards a post-industrial city: "Underlying all of these changes in the urban landscape are specific economic, social and political forces that are responsible for a major reshaping of advanced capitalist societies: there is a restructured industrial base, a shift to service employment and a consequent transformation of the working class, and indeed of the class structure in general; and there are shifts in state intervention and political ideology aimed at the privatization of consumption and service provision. Gentrification is a visible spatial component of this social transformation" (Smith a. Williams 2007, p. 3).

The city is then produced by and for upper-middle class newcomers (Ley 1980 and 2003; Florida 2002), based on a striving paradigm focusing on technology, knowledge economy and creativity. Florida, especially, has tried to link urban renewal to those stakeholders and to identify their leading role on metropolitan dynamics. As a consequence, gentrification is not a casual feature that can be observed in several cities: it is *at the heart* of the metropolisation process and "a major component of the urban imaginary" (Ley 2003) that is not criticised anymore, but rather welcomed (Slater 2006). Discourses and categories of action thus ostensibly changed in Hamburg in the early 1990s; in fact, they provoked the conservative political shift of 2001 and the launching of the current major urban projects.

Forms and perceptions of major urban projects in Hamburg

Spatial expressions of this discursive shift are to be found in three major urban projects in particular. The first of these, the *Hafencity* (2007–2020) is also considered the most ambitious. As in many other cities – but on an uncommonly large surface of 155 hectares – the city planned a thorough renovation of warehouses and wharfs in order to provide higher quality housing for 12,000 inhabitants and 40,000 jobs for highly skilled workers, the reconnection of this area to the neighbouring city-centre being secured by a new metro line. Public facilities were cautiously selected so that culture and creation appear as driving forces in the project: the Elbe Philharmonic concert hall, the Hafencity University and a "Creative and Cultural Centre" in Oberhafen will pave the way to several clusters of businesses dedicated to creation and information, such as around the *Spiegel* headquarters, at the eastern point of the site (Fig. 1). Numerous formal innovations are also to be

3 The term gentrification introduced in the scientific debate as early as 1964 by the English sociologist Ruth Glass, was defined as such: "one by one, many of the working-class quarters of London have been invaded by the middle classes—upper and lower. Once this process of 'gentrification' starts in a district it goes on rapidly until all or most of the original working-class occupiers are displaced and the whole social character of the district is changed" (Glass 1964:xviii, as quoted in Smith 2002, p. 438). However, the material and critical dimension of the process, expelling the poorest when their leases are over in favour of new, richer owners, has often been overlooked by more recent researches, only focusing on urban renewal and the seemingly positive new urban life trends (Slater 2006).

Fig. 2: The renewal of the southern part of the warehouses district (Speicherstadt), included in the HafenCity project combines symbolic remnants of the former logistics activity (crane, brick facades in the background) with new buildings in an international style, dedicated to business services (Depraz 2014)

observed in the local architecture, such as the Unilever and Marco Polo towers, intentionally qualified as "impressive" and "spectacular" on the project website[4].

This reflects a clear, image-based promotion strategy of the site : the search for verticality, the widespread use of glass panels, of external steel structures, of audacious overhangs, the random layout patterns of facades meet the international standards of post-modern functionalism. This oxymoron allows us to define buildings that are designed with a very regular internal geometry, so that modular work surfaces can be easily dedicated to business services, but with external novelties supposed to address the general taste of senior executives. As such, a great similarity with other waterfront renewal projects in Europe or around the world can be observed here, following the reference model of the London Docklands in the 1980s (Fig. 2) – however with more and more conspicuous architectural gestures. The Elbe Philharmony, for instance, plays the role of flagship building in the project, hoping to have a " Guggenheim effect " (Plaza 1999; Vicario a. Martinez Monje 2003) such as in Bilbao, Spain. Indeed, far beyond its local function, the concert hall is directed to an international audience and shall embody the expected new image of the city, even at the price of uncontrolled public spending[5].

It is also interesting to question the toponymy in the project area: a large share of names refer to international places and ports, producing a feeling of global cultural mix. Worthy of note are Vasco de Gama and Dar es Salaam squares; Marco Polo and Magellan terraces; Singapore, Hong-Kong, Kobe, Yokohama and Korean streets; Osaka and Shanghai alleys; Chicago and Buenos Aires wharfs. Several of those places are actually twin cities of Hamburg that were selected during the 1980s and 1990s: therefore, they meet the overseas tradition of the city as they are also port cities of international significance. Nevertheless, some other names refer more openly to American symbols of the neo-liberal society, such as the Lohsepark, advertised as "the Central Park of the HafenCity", or the franchised world food restaurants on the waterfront, or the open-air courts for street basketball. Those signs evidence "the aesthetic and cultural aspects of the process assert a white Anglo appropriation of urban space and urban history", even taking on a "colonial aspect (…) through the universalising of certain forms of (de)regulation", "the privatisation of the housing market" and "an expansionist neo-liberalism in public policy that often accentuates social divisions" (Atkinson a. Bridge 2005, p. 2–3). The validation of this last point shall be made through a comparative review of housing prices. On the private market, in the 40 to 80 square

4 http://www.hafencity.com/ (retrieved oct., 2015).

5 The Philharmonic building, designed by the international architect firm Herzog & de Meuron, represented a 10-year work while its budget rocketed from 77 to 780 million euros during the same time. The municipality of Hamburg had to resort to participative financing, calling for private sponsorship and a popular subscription to complete the project.

Fig. 3: The new skyline in Sankt-Pauli produced by the renewal of the site of the Bavaria brewery (Depraz 2014)

metres segment, a sharp speculative soaring in housing prices was observed in the area when the last building phase was launched, at the beginning of 2015. Apartments for sale were rated at 8,920 €/m^2, compared to 3,555 €/m^2 on average for the whole agglomeration[6]. Therefore, 20 % of the housing offer had to be secured with subsidized building schemes or social leases.

In a more complex way, the Sankt-Pauli district also experienced a renewal period, however more scattered and driven by private initiative – primarily Willi Bartels (1914–2007), a Hamburg businessman that has invested in this historical area since the 2000s. Bartels decided to erect some striking symbols of the economic development of Hamburg just behind the waterfront: the *Hafenkrone* (the "crown of the harbour"), a set of several towers and buildings that now shapes a distinctive skyline along the Elbe (Fig. 3). This private initiative was accepted by the Senate, provided that public spaces would be maintained to let people circulate between the new buildings. The first implementation of the project was made on the wastelands of the *Bavaria* brewery, the one that produced the Astra beer and that moved to Altona to enjoy wider space.

There is more ambiguity in this second project regarding its relationship to the local habits and territorial uses. Bartels, who was nicknamed "king of Sankt-Pauli", really was a popular local figure. Nevertheless, his project fell within the common criticism of using industrial heritage as an alibi (Edelblutte 2009) since one sole beer boat was kept on site as a token of the past. Otherwise, the whole project meets postmodern architecture criteria: three towers are sheltering a luxury hotel, cultural premises, offices and 120 apartments over 28,000 m^2. The new services provided do not fit with the existing local population anymore since they are aimed at better-off customers, when the district remains very working-class. Vertical buildings, squeezed within low, narrow streets, contrast with the usual perception of the area.

The same ambiguous reinterpretation of the tradition of the district can be found north of the *Bavaria* site, at the top of the *Reeperbahn*: the "dancing towers ", completed in 2012, are also very striking in the area (Fig. 4). Admittedly, the buildings are taking over the existing recreational function of the avenue (hotel and restaurant, radio station offices and nightclub), but with upmarket positioning: the gourmet offer of the restaurant, at street level, echoes the trendy underground reconstruction of a popular nightclub that was famous in the 1990s.

According to Wischmann (op. cit.), all those new forms, their bulkiness, their visual presence and the new symbolic spatial partitions they convey, contribute to creating a feeling of distance among the in-place population: "when you look from here toward the Empire Riverside hotel, or in the direction of the brewery, you can well see the clean break, the violent change" (field interview, Wischmann, op.

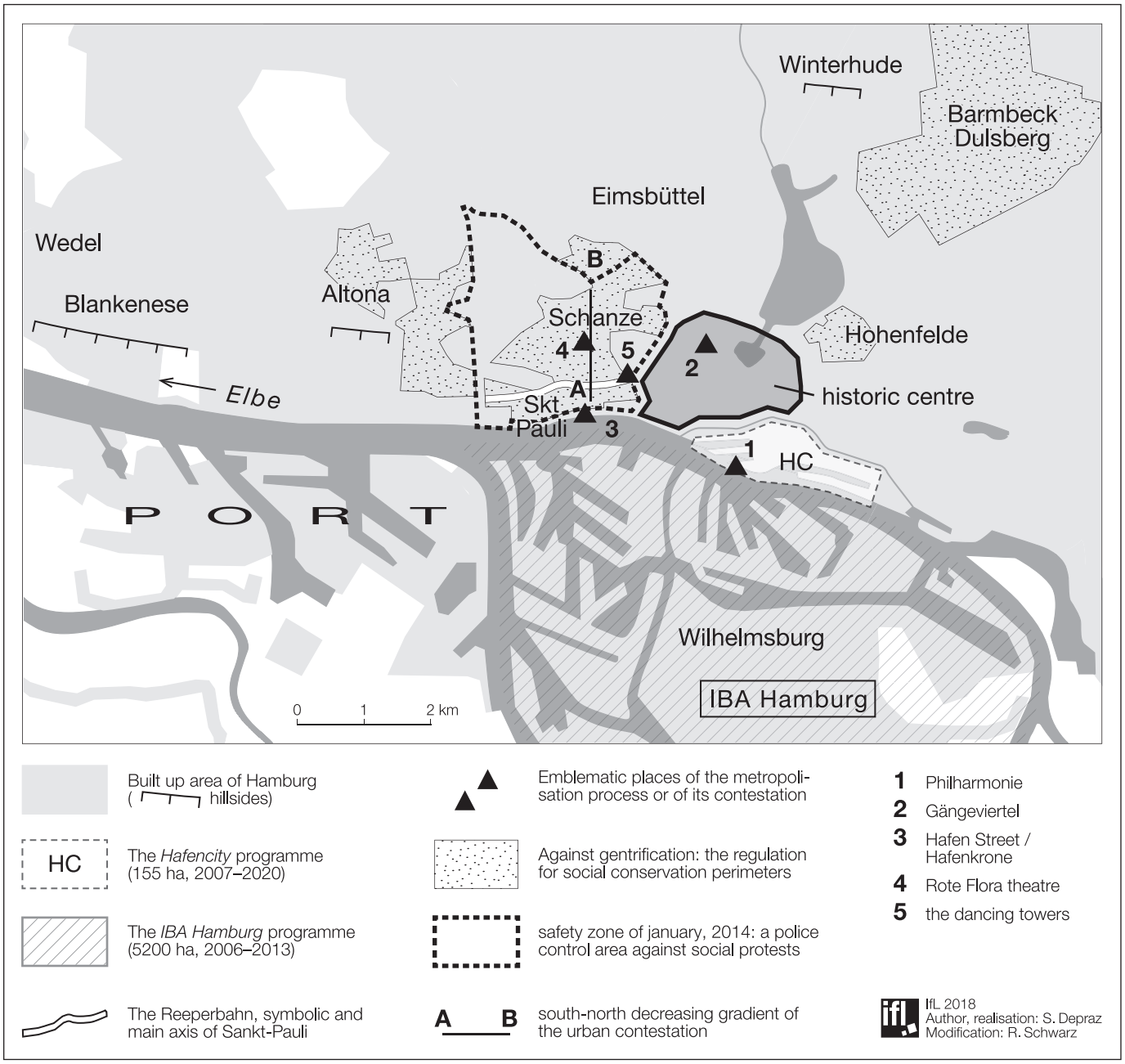
6 Source: www.wohnungsboerse.de/ (retrieved May, 2015).

Fig. 4: A sharp contrast appears on the Reeperbahn, with its outdated street furniture and its ageing functional architecture on one side, and the "dancing towers" (2012) on the other side, an iconic building that reveals the ongoing re-conquest of the city by metropolitan upper functions (Depraz 2014)

cit.). The notion of "gentrification front" (Smith 1996; Atkinson a. Bridge 2005; Clerval 2010) makes perfect sense when, in the same street, the bay window of a gastronomic restaurant on one side coexists with, on the other side, the squat houses of the red district with their greasy spoons, their stalls for low-quality importation products and their prostitutes (Wischmann, op. cit.).

In addition to those strong territorial markers, a third project can be studied in the southern part of the agglomeration: the *Internationale Bauaustellung Hamburg* (2006–2013), now *IBA Hamburg GmbH* (2014). Covering about 5,200 hectares, this huge – but lighter – form of intervention is consistent with the tradition of reflective thinking of the "international architecture exhibitions" (IBA) in Germany. Similarly to the Hafencity, the project aimed at reconnecting the degraded areas of the southern riverbanks of the Elbe to the city centre; but, in this case, the social issues had to be strongly taken into account since those neighbourhoods (Wilhelmsburg, Veddel) were still populated and had been targeted for a long time by urban policies. The IBA was thus designed as an experiment based on a collection of about 70 separate local projects, rather than a global programmatic framework. In doing so, the urban fabric had to be worked through a detailed processing, relying from the very outset on a consultation with residents and several participative workshops, so that collective needs and wishes could emerge at the micro-local scale.

However, in that case as well, some limits are to be reported. Obviously, the project largely steers clear of criticism regarding the built forms, which do not betray any gross strategy of power, that is to say any visual discourse of domination and rupture. The consultation and participation process did occur and seemed to be successful; the proceedings of the meetings were published online and showed the population's needs were taken into account. But social selectivity happened all the same, in a more indirect way, because of the type of issues that were submitted to discussion and the – very postmodern – categories of thought that were promoted by the moderators (Barbier 2015). The environmental issues, for instance, permeated the whole discussion as a non-negotiable categorical imperative, along with the aesthetics of greening and the life ethics they usually convey. One can therefore point out the biased bases of this participative procedure: the managers – albeit unconsciously – pitch pre-set ideas in the foreground, or will formulate them according to their vision, so that the collective discussion will be channelled in advance. Since the idea of environmental sustainability is very difficult to dispute, this dimension often silences any possible social protest rather than fostering it (Béal 2011). As such, the *IBA Hamburg* project filters social issues and forces social acceptance through a metropolitan reading



Map 1: Major urban changes and their contestation in Hamburg – Author's conception, 2016; background map: © Kober-Kümmerly+Frey 2003, Köln

grid built upon selective aesthetics and a strong environmental bias in the design of the future city (Barbier, op. cit.).

The contestation culture of Hamburg

Criticism of urban transformation and opposition to renewal projects have not directly been brought about by the most recent planning programmes in Hamburg, nor do they originate from the current alternative movements against metropolisation. We have to trace back those social practices to the past, since they have defined the most central districts of Hamburg for a long time – those which combine relative social precariousness with offensive political activism against capitalism and globalisation: Sankt-Pauli, Sternschanze, and Altona mainly[7]. Some emblematic places illustrate the perennial character of this contestation culture.

In Sankt-Pauli, along the river on the Hafen Street, an old block of rental terraced houses, owned by the municipality of Hamburg, was scheduled to be demolished at the beginning of the 1980s. But the run-down buildings were staunchly defended by their inhabitants, who started a squat, which was followed by expulsions and walling up, but then a new occupation. After long-lasting legal proceedings, some prison terms but also hunger strikes and barricades, the inhabitants finally received temporary rental

7 The HafenCity project was established in a mostly unoccupied area of the harbour, and thus aroused less opposition – with the notable exception of criticism against the weak local anchorage of the street names.

Fig. 6: The crossing of the Schulterblatt Street and the Julius Street in Hamburg. The squatted Rote Flora theatre, on the right, stands in sharp contrast with an architect house on the left. This street corner was at the heart of the Dec. 2013 demonstration in Hamburg. (Depraz 2014)

Fig. 5: Graphic designs expressing an indirect social protest on the feet of buildings in Sternschanze (Rosenhofstraße) (Depraz 2014)

agreements, before getting regularised during the 1990s. In between, they sought to prove the viability of their housing by upgrading the infrastructures to current standards thanks to a self-management association. Nowadays, the occupants still cultivate an alternative way of life demonstrated through mural paintings, ephemeral artistic productions and a free radio station. However, the atmosphere is still marked by conflicts: administrative control remains frequent and causes some violent answers; bills are not regularly paid and the police often raid the apartments on suspicion of involvement in terrorism. The Hafen Street houses thus remain the symbol of an alternative activism and of an urban space freed from any social alienation – or a no-rights zone, depending on one's view.

To the north-west of the city centre, the Gängeviertel is a traditional craftsmen's district that used to be densely packed with workshops built in a typical industrial style of the turn of the XXth century. The Gängeviertel had a long-lasting reputation as a closed, unsafe district, characterised by a working-class culture and the communist movement, at least until the Second World War. This neighbourhood was then gradually renewed during the 1960s, breaking with the popular heritage and the craft tradition. Only a few workshops were still operating at the break of the XXIst century. When the last businesses closed, a Dutch investor positioned himself to buy the whole blocks of the district and turn them into quality housing, after erasing the remaining craft facilities from courtyards. But a popular initiative, driven by an artistic collective, seized the site in 2009, edited a manifesto for maintaining the site open for creative activities and managed to set up a squat of about 200 artists there. An important

communication campaign took place, as well as the opening of the site to the general public with temporary exhibitions and free events. The Senate of Hamburg finally cancelled the sale; the site was rehabilitated in 2013 and a cooperative is now responsible for operating the site.

The permanence of the contestation is also expressed in the strategy of territorial marking in the Sankt-Pauli and Sternschanze districts. Street art in Hamburg is pervasive, and graffiti are promoted as a form of cultural expression, being at the same time a marginal artistic expression, a social critique but also a means to tame, if not to appropriate, current urban transformations by transgressing post-modern metropolitan aesthetics (Reinecke 2012). Some names of street artists have even become famous in the regional press, when some graffiti have real artistic value and explicit political content. Graphic designs, superposed on one another with incredible density, systematically cover every wall and door of the buildings up to a height of about two metres (Fig. 5). The intensity of this territorial marking is clearly organised according to a south-north gradient, decreasing along an urban transect running from Sankt-Pauli to Eimsbüttel, via Sternschanze and Carolinenviertel (refer to Map 1).

A last symbol of contestation can be found in the *Rote Flora* theatre, a hot spot of activism located in the Sternschanze district, to the north of Sankt-Pauli. This building has been continuously squatted since 1989, when an investment project bought the premises, aiming at turning them into a private concert hall, with the sole facade remaining. It then became a symbol of local resistance against the gentrification of the area. It is used today as a cultural centre, with a self-managed artistic programming, and serves as a meeting hall for political struggles at the same time. The Senate of Hamburg tried first to mediate with the collective, and established short-term rental contracts for the artists while securing the public use of the theatre. In the meantime, the owner abandoned his project and resold the building to the municipality in 2014, after a demonstration for the defence of the self-managed cultural centre in December, 2013 – claiming the "right to the city" or "the city belongs to everyone" – caused 620 people to be injured in a clash with riot police.

Such a conflicting atmosphere provoked a spatial response from the local authorities, which decreed a safety zone between Sankt-Pauli and Sternschanze at the beginning of 2014. In that "danger area", frequent identity checks were deployed to better monitor local militant groups. This increased severity against urban contestation echoes the "zero tolerance" policy against the marginalized population and the activists in many gentrified metropolises worldwide, on the model of the stop-and-frisk policy in New York. This may precisely be the sign of the takeover of the heart of the city by "revanchist" elites, according to Smith (1996).

Indeed, the gentrification in Sternschanze is real. Against the wishes of its occupants, the *Rote Flora* embodies a renewed image of a cultural avant-garde and serves, as such, as a bridgehead for real estate speculation, since the investors anticipate the improvement of the local urban representations. The gentrification process is already visible in the new commercial signage, that fits with a "rising class (…) with a secure economic base", bearing "the standards of good taste and a consumer-oriented lifestyle" (Ley 1980, pp. 242–243) or, in other words, with a "dominant class made up of trend-setters and opinion-makers" (Hamnett 1997, p. 7). It is confirmed in the evolution of the built environment, where some fortunate pioneers invest in the district and upgrade houses one by one, renovating facades, raising rooftops and opening terraces – but protecting themselves from an over-exposition to public visibility at the same time with sliding panels or tinted / deflecting windows. Many of those renovated buildings will be intentionally blurred on Google StreetView pictures, for instance (Fig. 6).

Some regulatory measures have also been taken by local authorities, especially since the socio-democrats came back in power in 2011. The public development corporation of Hamburg, the *Steg*, strengthened its efforts to renovate social housing, while securing the rents and maintaining existing tenants. Planning documents have been amended as well, so that real estate investors looking for speculative positioning can be persuaded not to enter those districts: the "regulation for social conservation", for instance, remains quite unusual in Germany (Vogelpohl 2015), but it has been implemented in Hamburg since it imposes special administrative authorizations for any substantial changes in the urban forms. The targeted changes are especially those that could lead to immediate increased rental values or to the reduction of the rental market in favour of a private market consisting mainly or fully of owner-occupiers. The aim consists therefore in keeping the "social structure" of the district as long as possible. However, the measure remains non-coercive and unsystematic, since the fate of each parcel can be negotiated on a case-by-case basis between the buyer and the local authorities. The general idea is mainly to "bluff" (Vogelpohl idem), playing on the idea that there is a constraint and a will to preserve the existing image of those neighbourhoods, while displaying a local policy that is more attentive to social issues.

Five central districts were concerned in 2016, including Sankt-Pauli and Sternschanze. Through the implementation of this planning tool, the municipal authority wishes to prove that the most controversial issues of the gentrification process have been taken into account – even though this regulatory measure is mostly a scare tactic against speculation and is not very effective in the long term when facing strong real estate pressure (Vogelpohl 2012).

Conclusion

On November 29, 2015, a referendum on the possible application of Hamburg for the 2024 summer Olympic Games highlighted again the internal tensions of the city[8]: the vote turned out to be negative, thus confirming the resistance force of a majority of the population to the lure of globalisation. Naturally, this refusal was mainly explained by the fear of budgetary overspending and doping scandals in professional sport. Nevertheless, it should be reviewed in the light of the contestation culture and the social awareness towards urban renovation programmes in Hamburg.

Local authorities, in a certain way, have used the metropolisation process as a way of reinterpreting urban problems a door-opener that seems to subsume social issues into the goal of the economic development of the city. But this approach takes on a paradoxical value in Hamburg and is not easily accepted by everyone, since the city tries to adopt post-industrial codes and to engage in gentrification even though its economic and social strength relies on a solid productive base, especially significant in its industrial and logistic components, with maintained working-class awareness. Several hotspots crystallise tensions and materialize a gentrification front, representing either the expression of the investor's power (*Hafencity*, *Hafenkrone*), or the manifestation of the traditional urban contestation in Hamburg (Hafen Street, *Rote Flora*). Social mediation is frequent though, but is rarely successful, with the possible exception of the Gängeviertel, where an organised contestation earned legitimacy by promoting artistic creativity. The *IBA Hamburg* remains at an intermediate stage with a truncated participatory process.

In any case, the observed social divide regarding the evolution of urban forms in Hamburg betrays the strength of speculative investments in the city-centre rather than an internal change in local society. Reflecting the substantive debate on gentrification, the case of Hamburg discloses which force is driving the production of urban spaces: it is not the user, but the investor that fosters metropolisation, that is to say offer rather than demand. As for Smith (1979), gentrification is mostly "a back to the city movement by capital, not people". Competing discourses and representations in Hamburg confirm anyway the statement that metropolises are "contested cities" (Gintrac a. Giroud 2014) and that there are broader social expectations for a more equally shared production of urban spaces.

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Резюме

Самюэль Депра

Гамбург. Противоречия и противостояния в рабочем мегаполисе

Цель данной работы заключается в рассмотрении прогрессирующего процесса метрополизации Гамбурга в контексте четко выраженного полицентрического экономического пространства Германии, в котором несколько крупных городов борются за лидирующие позиции на международном уровне. Как государственные, так и частные структуры в этой второй по величине городской агломерации Германии активно работают над расширением экономических функций города и реализуют для этого амбициозные программы обновления городского пространства. В работе рассматривается влияние этой трансформации на формы градостроительства, а также связанный с этим процесс джентрификации, то есть приток более состоятельных групп населения и фешенебельных заведений в центральные районы города. Тем не менее давно закрепившийся за Гамбургом статус портового рабочего города влечет за собой неприятие этого процесса метрополизации, проявляющееся в особых и порой насильственных формах, так как некоторым альтернативным группам населения он кажется неуместным для города, осознающего себя как город рабочих.

Гамбург; метрополизация; градостроительные проекты; джентрификация; радикальная критика

Résumé

Hamburg: paradoxes et représentations contradictoires d'une métropole populaire

Cet article examine les conditions de l'émergence d'une dimension métropolitaine à Hambourg, dans le contexte allemand d'un polycentrisme économique très marqué où plusieurs métropoles sont en compétition pour accéder à un statut de commandement international. Les acteurs publics et privés de la seconde agglomération d'Allemagne portent un discours militant en faveur de l'essor des fonctions économiques supérieures de la ville ainsi que des projets de rénovation urbaine ambitieux

On analyse ainsi les effets de ces transformations sur les formes urbaines, ainsi que le processus corrélatif de gentrification qui voit la reconquête des centres par les classes aisées et les activités de services supérieurs. Cependant le caractère populaire et industrieux de la ville portuaire suscite des réactions originales de rejet violent d'une métropolisation mal adaptée à une identité populaire encore défendue par plusieurs segments alternatifs de la société urbaine.

Hambourg; métropolisation; projets urbains; gentrification; critique radicale