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Abstract This article explores how archival and cultural politics of remembrance distorted the perception of Berlin's former Turkish Bazaar, a cultural hub at Bülowstraße train station between 1979 and 1991, a period during which the station was not used for transport. The bazaar's establishment is interwoven with the history of migration of people with Turkish origin in post-war Germany, starting in 1961 with a labour recruitment agreement between Turkey and Germany. The bazaar was a collection of Turkish-oriented shops, social spaces and a *gazino*, a restaurant-bar and music venue. To analyse the site's perception— or lack thereof —the author describes omissions and silences within the field of architecture as a kind of “architectural gaslighting”. The author's creation of an architectural model counteracts architectural gaslighting by affirming the experiences of past visitors and highlighting the bazaar as an architectural contribution to Berlin.

Résumé Cet article explore comment les politiques archivistiques et culturelles de la mémoire ont contribué à déformer la perception de l'ancien Bazar Turc de Berlin. Ce lieu culturel était situé à la gare de Bülowstraße entre 1979 et 1991, une période durant laquelle la gare n'était plus utilisée pour le transport. La création du bazar est étroitement liée à l'histoire de la migration des personnes d'origine turque dans l'Allemagne d'après-guerre, débutant en 1961 avec un accord de recrutement de travailleurs entre la Turquie et l'Allemagne. Le bazar était composé de boutiques liées à la culture turque, d'espaces sociaux et d'un *gazino*, un restaurant-bar et lieu de musique. En analysant la perception de ce site culturel, l'auteur met en lumière les omissions et les silences qui accompagnent les descriptions du bazar, qualifiant ces absences de « gaslighting architectural ». La création, par l'auteur, d'un modèle architectural entend contrecarrer ce gaslighting architectural en intégrant les expériences des anciens visiteurs et en resituant le bazar comme contribution architecturale à la ville de Berlin.

The Traces of Berlin's Turkish Bazaar

On my commute to the Technische Universität Berlin I used to take the U2 train line, which connects the city's southwest and northeast. Today, that route is seamless. Yet it was once interrupted because of the division of Berlin and the 1961 construction of the Berlin Wall. The stretch between Thälmannplatz and Wittenbergplatz went out of service in late 1971, according to a 1972 Berlin-Brandenburg Broadcasting ("BVG-Änderungen zum Jahresanfang", 1972) news clip and a 1975 Berlin Transportation Company bulletin ("Berliner Verkehrsblätter", 1975). While some of the stops in that stretch were simply abandoned, others, like Bülowstraße and Nollendorplatz, were used as alternative types of infrastructure for West Berlin.

The Turkish Bazaar occupied the Bülowstraße elevated train station—one of the stops between the interrupted stretch of the U2 line—from 1979 to 1991, a period during which the station was not used for public transport. The bazaar was a collection of Turkish-oriented shops, social spaces and a *gazino*—a restaurant-bar and music venue. I first learned about the Turkish Bazaar from Cem Kaya's music documentary *Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm* ("Love, Deutschmarks and Death"), which featured archival materials and interviews with artists who visited the place (*Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm*, 2022). In the film, the artist and performer Cavidan Ünal states that the

bazaar was a "central attraction in Berlin". Musician Hatay Engin remembered the bazaar as a "wonderful place", concluding that "those were the golden days of Berlin" (*ibid.*, 49:00-50:50). Many famed musicians from Turkey performed at the bazaar's *gazino*, including Zeki Müren, Öztürk Serengil, and Bülent Ersoy, making it a cultural reference for people of Turkish origin in Berlin and Germany (Fig. 1).

In October 2022, I attended a screening of *Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm* at the HUZUR community centre, near Bülowstraße station. Kaya was there for a conversation after the screening. The conversation turned to the Turkish Bazaar. Many people in the audience had visited it but never had the chance to talk about it as part of the making of the cultural cityscape. Seeing the bazaar and the cultural scene that it fostered represented in the film offered not only a confirmation that the bazaar *had* actually existed but an affirmation of its relevance. One particular statement from that evening stayed with me: "They didn't care to rename the station *Türkischer Basar*". The station is rather named after Friedrich Wilhelm Freiherr von Bülow—a Prussian general who fought in the Napoleonic Wars (Stark, 2023). The images and conversation regarding the Turkish Bazaar show that adaptations to the train station were needed to make the bazaar operative: train tracks were



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Fig. 1
Türkischer Basar
U-Bülowstrasse, Berlin, 1980.
© BVG Archive Collection.

Fig. 2
U-Bahnhof Bülowstrasse's
Conversion, Berlin, 1978.
Photograph by unidentified
author of Bruno Möhring
Bülowstrasse station during
the construction of U-Tropia.
© BVG Archive Collection.



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covered, additional gates and entry points were included, and dozens of stalls with the needed infrastructure were built. Even with these major architectural transformations of the original structure, no physical trace remains. The only evidence of the bazaar's existence is one line on a small metal plaque placed by the Berlin Transportation Company (BVG), featuring a timeline of significant moments in the station's history such as extensions, uses, closures and its reopening as a train station in 1993.¹ Since 1995, the train station has been listed as an architectural monument (*Baudenkmal*) by the State Monument Preservation in Berlin (*Landesdenkmalamt*). Its online database describes the changes implemented between 1975 and 1991 only as “shops and restaurants”; the sole mention of an architectural change is the extension carried out in 1928 by Rudolf Möhring, the son of Bruno Möhring, the station's original architect (*Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, 2023*). The bazaar's contribution to and significance and spatial manifestation in Berlin fall outside the typical reach of studies of architecture and remembrance, creating a contrast between, on the one hand, the accounts in *Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm* and the evidence of its relevance in its 12-year run and, on the other, the lack of proportional acknowledgement by Berlin's institutions. (**Fig. 2**)

Architect and historian Dolores Hayden has emphasized the link between memory and space, elaborating that cityscapes as environments for inhabitants' lives, hold social value in memory. However, Hayden adds, remembering spaces relevant to marginalized groups has been neglected. The reason for this is not that these groups have not participated in making the city but that their contributions have rarely been acknowledged (Hayden, 1995: 7–9). Other writers, artists and spatial practitioners have called for a complete reimagining of cities via a decolonial lens that would necessitate redesigning and recontextualizing buildings, monuments and other city objects, thereby

favouring perspectives of communities that have been marginalized or whose spaces and memories have been obliterated. In discussing the Turkish Bazaar, it is crucial to look at the history of migration of Turkish immigrants in Berlin and their specific relationship and contribution to Berlin's architecture and urbanity.

The history of migration in post-war Germany was largely shaped by labour recruitment agreements to address Germany's labour shortage in specific industries. In 1961, a recruitment agreement between Turkey and West Germany drove many workers from Turkey to migrate to West Germany for employment. The recruitment agreement lasted 12 years, ending in 1973, but allowed for family reunifications in the years that followed (Kaya, 2001: 13–15). More than 750,000 people from Turkey are estimated to have migrated to West Germany during the period of the agreement, shaping some of the urban context with new businesses and meeting places (Kaya, 2001). The Turkish Bazaar was spatial evidence of the presence of people of Turkish origin in Berlin and Germany but also a way to take up space in the city, to be present.

To complement the existing scholarship, I searched online for more personal experiences of the site. In 2016, *Renk Magazine* published “Der Bahnhof Bülowstrasse. Erinnerungen an einen vergessenen Ort” (The Bülowstrasse Station. Remembering a Forgotten Site). The author, Özlem Suzana Ayaydinli, gives a personal account of the site by referring to the bazaar as “legendary” and as a place where people who longed for their homeland created their own world in a still divided Berlin (Ayaydinli, 2016). The *New York Times* 1984 article “Germany's Guest Workers”,² by Pranay Gupte, describes both the bazaar and the hostility experienced by “Turkish Workers” invited to work in Germany (Gupte, 1984). These personal accounts, combined with more official narratives of the history of Turkish immigration to Germany, inspired me to collect materials that help me create

1 Plaque on Bülowstraße train station in Berlin, visited on 15 February 2023.

2 The term “guest worker” is no longer used.

a digital architectural model. Here, I am taking inspiration from the work of Forensic Architecture, approaching architecture as a “field of knowledge” focused on the relationships between individuals, objects and space (Forensic Architecture, 2014). To create the model, I took Bülöwstraße station’s existing architecture as a starting point and compared it to images from the *Renk* article and footage from *Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm*. My intention with the model was not to recreate the building just for the sake of reproduction but to include new accounts of the making of the bazaar as a significant space of cultural memory.

The analysis of space should not be limited to investigating its physicality; it should also include the social relationships in its production, as philosopher Henry Lefebvre argues in *The Production of Space*. Lefebvre moves away from the idea of neutrality in space and defines it not only as a medium or interface but as something “active, both as instrument and as goal, as means and as end” (Lefebvre, 1991). On the basis of Lefebvre’s work, Hayden’s writings and my experience of the HUZUR screening, I developed a term to work against the obliteration of spaces that have a social relevance: *architectural gaslighting* (Prado Serrano, 2023). I borrowed the word gaslighting from the play “Gas Light” by Patrick Hamilton and the two film adaptations: one in 1940 directed by Thorold Dickinson and one in 1944 directed by George Cukor. Gaslighting was the “word of 2022”, according to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023a), entering contemporary culture with the following definition:

Psychological manipulation of a person usually over an extended period of time that causes the victim to question the validity of their own thoughts, perception of reality, or memories and typically leads to confusion, loss of confidence and self-esteem, uncertainty of one’s emotional or mental stability, and a dependency on the perpetrator. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2023b)

Architectural gaslighting is the deliberate act of not remembering a place or moment related to space. It is the lack of acknowledgement and confirmation—whether by institutions or society—of spaces. Architectural gaslighting is a form of systematic forgetting. As Trouillot writes, “Effective silencing does not require a conspiracy, not even a political consensus. Its roots are structural” (Trouillot, 1995).

By placing a special focus on the bazaar’s architecture, certain actions described in this paper were intended to impart an understanding of the place and to establish a conversation with people that experienced it. This was done by searching for the bazaar’s traces on site and in archival collections, and by making an architectural model that simultaneously acknowledges its spatial manifestation and facilitates the exchange of experiences, anecdotes and inputs. Similar to the work of Forensic Architecture, the model is an architectural tool for bringing to light past events, thus starting a dialogue about such events.

Shortly after I started working on the model, I noticed I would need additional material to fill the spatial gaps. I therefore searched for additional materials in local, city and state archives that would include architectural plans, sketches, photographs, film footage, documents and articles related to the Turkish Bazaar.

Archives, whether public or private, are spaces and institutions in which records, data and materials are collected, commissioned, stored and classified. Historian Julia Moritz defines the archive as a “meta-institution, an institution of institutions”, as it works in two ways: governance and memory (Moritz, 2016). My experience of migration in Germany shaped the way I navigated

archival institutions, adapting to their protocols and conditions.

I found dozens of plans, photographs, videos and documents, scattered around the various archives in Berlin, that illustrate the story of Bülowstraße station and how the Turkish Bazaar came into existence.³ The scope of my search encompassed the period between 1901, when the station was built, to 1993, when the U2 train line resumed operations. Even though the bazaar existed for only 12 years, I needed to understand the conditions of its production in order to understand—as anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot puts it—where and when “silences enter the process of historical production” (Trouillot, 1995).

Bülowstraße: From Train Station to Venue

In the photograph collection of the Tempelhof-Schöneberg District Historical Archive, several images from 1945 show war-related damage to the train station and the elevated train tracks (Hochbahn Bülowstraße Nachkrieg, 1945). Although the station was rehabilitated, the U2 train line was cut off by the division of Berlin. As a consequence, station demand decreased, leading to its closure by the end of 1971 (BVG-Änderungen zum Jahresanfang, 1972). In a 1975 clip from the show “Berliner Abendschau”, the station appears in disrepair and abandoned, but the clip also reveals plans for a fair to take place using the station’s architecture. The *Berliner Jahrmarkt* (Berlin Fair) would be a set of food and shopping stalls, for which the station’s train tracks were covered, levelling the floor to host the fair (“Berliner Abendschau”, 1975). It opened in October 1975 but remained open for only four months, closing in February of the following year (“Berliner Verkehrsblätter”, 1976). It wasn’t until three

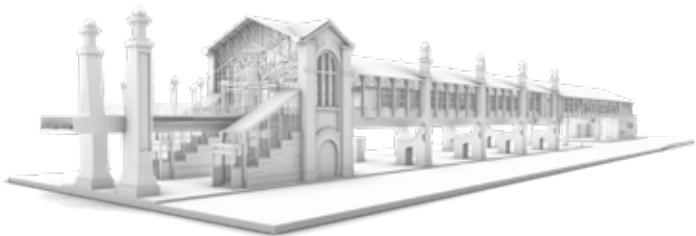
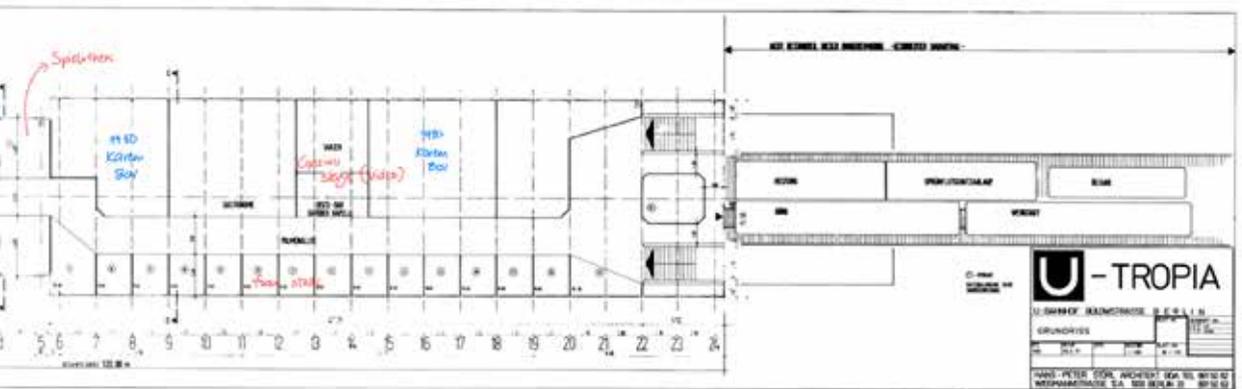
years later that another concept took over the abandoned station: *U-Tropia Bahnhof der Nationen* (U-Tropia, Station of Nations). At the BVG Archive, a 16-page brochure presents a concept for an “international” mall/shopping centre/club. The name is self-explanatory: a “utopian”, “tropical” centre. “An abundance of tropical and sub-tropical cultures. Palm trees will define the picture. And many other exotic plants. A place with a friendly atmosphere that beautifies the station” (“U-Tropia: Bahnhof der Nationen”, 1977). The brochure’s graphics are an offensive mix of stereotypical and racist representations of what the authors imagined the “station of nations” to be. After several months of planning, *U-Tropia* opened in August 1978. Only a few months later, due to its lack of success and bankruptcy, *U-Tropia* closed, in February 1979 (“Berliner Verkehrsblätter”, 1979a).

At the end of 1979 it was announced that a Turkish Bazaar would take over Bülowstraße station, reusing *U-Tropia*’s interior architecture (“Berliner Verkehrsblätter”, 1979b). This consisted of an arrangement of stalls at different angles on the sides of the covered structure, leaving a central path for circulation (Fig. 3). The same stalls and angles can be seen in photographs found at the BVG Collection⁴ and on film footage from the Berlin-Brandenburg Broadcasting (RBB) Archive (“Berliner Abendschau”, 1980). At the back of the station, *U-Tropia*’s performance hall was repurposed as the bazaar’s *gazzino*. Even the palm trees in the hallways of *U-Tropia* can be seen in some of the photographs of the bazaar. (Fig. 3)

An invitation to the grand opening from 1980 reads: “Ein deutsch-türkisches Kommunikationszentrum in Herzen Berlin” (A German-Turkish meeting/communication centre in the heart of Berlin) (Flohmarkt U-Tropia Türk, 1980). The invitation was sent by Atalay Özçakir, a Turkish actor and the founder of the Turkish Bazaar. Özçakir was featured in a few local articles, expressing his intentions to make the bazaar a

3 My research included the following archives: Berlin State Archive (*Landesarchiv*), Architectural Archive of the Schöneberg District (*Bauarchiv*), Berlin Transportation Company (BVG), the Schöneberg-Tempelhof District Historical Archive, the State Monument Preservation in Berlin (*Landesdenkmalamt Archiv*), the Baden-Württemberg State Archive and the Berlin-Brandenburg Broadcasting (RBB) Collection.

4 Photograph of interior of Turkish Bazaar from 1980. BVG Archive Collection.



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relevant meeting point for Özçakir's compatriots—people of Turkish origin (Ein Orientalischer Hauch, 1988). One of his ideas was to create in Berlin a miniature version of Istanbul's Grand Bazaar, as he expressed to the *Berliner Lokalanzeiger* ("Souvenirs und Bauchtanz, Textilien und Trikotagen", 1990). The Turkish Bazaar had dozens of stalls selling cassettes, movies, bridal fashion, jewellery, carpets and textiles. It had import/export businesses, a travel agency and, towards the back, the *gazino*, a restaurant-bar with live performances. Özçakir, using his acting background, was able to attract music celebrities and artists by providing them with a cultural platform (Zeppenfeld, 2021: 299). Although major celebrities and pop stars from Turkey were performing in the heart of the city, there was little acknowledgement from the rest of Berlin's population. Journalist Barry Graves, at the time working for *Rundfunk im Amerikanischen Sektor* (RIAS), said in an interview that appeared in *Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm*:

It would be no problem to have Turkish artists perform at colorful evenings, quiz shows or any type of event to bring Germans and Turkish closer together through culture. So people can say 'hey, that's interesting! Ajda Pekkan, who you've been playing all day in your apartment next door. I saw her on TV. She looks wonderful and has a fantastic voice.' That unfortunately does not happen. That's where the media have really failed. During all those years, no attempt was made to say, this is how your Turkish neighbor lives and what he does in his free time. (Aşk, Mark ve Ölüm, 2022: 42:00–42:40)

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, the U2 train line was set to resume operations after 32 years. Dozens of archival articles, architectural plans and photographs depict the moment and reactions to it. The last tram connecting the Turkish Bazaar to the "Nolle" *Berliner Flohmarkt*—which occupied Nollendorfpfplatz station—ran in February 1991 ("Wann das der alte Zille wüßte", 1991). Four months later, in June 1991, the Turkish Bazaar finally closed.

By July 1991, Hans-Peter Ströl, the architect who designed the space for the U-Tropia concept, provided an architectural proposal to put an end to the Turkish Bazaar and relaunch Bülowstraße train station ("Durchbingung...", 1991).

Asymmetry in the Findings

The focus of many of the stalls at the Turkish Bazaar represented, in some ways, the lack of representation in the media. Most of the shops imported and exported music and films, since German broadcasters didn't feature them, and at the time satellite television was not widely available.

In most archives, information about the other markets and events at the train station were overrepresented in comparison to the material related to the Turkish Bazaar. For instance, while the *Berliner Jahrmakt* and *U-Tropia* closed their doors after less than a year and the Turkish Bazaar ran for 12 years, the BVG photograph collection has 71 photographs of the *Berliner Jahrmakt*, 44 of *U-Tropia* and only nine of the Turkish Bazaar.⁵ The *Landesarchiv* had no photographs on its online database about the Turkish Bazaar, but they had several of the 1975 *Berliner Jahrmarkt* (Landesdenkmalamt Berlin, 2023). Among the many articles at the Tempelhof-Schöneberg Archive Collection, 12 report the resuming of the U2 line, a one-time event, while only three mention the Turkish Bazaar, which took place over a 12-year period.⁶ At the *Landesdenkmalamt* Archive, only one memo mentions the Turkish Bazaar, while dozens of documents, photographs and plans register details of the original building, the *Berliner Jahrmarkt* and *U-Tropia*.

The under-representation of the Turkish Bazaar expands outside the archives. It would be difficult for most passersby in Bülowstraße and for general audiences in Berlin to know about it. The historical context of the division of Berlin is widely known, but there is less awareness of its history of migration. In the past, when I elaborated on

5 BVG Archive Collection, visited in November 2022.

6 Text-Archiv Schöneberg, Tempelhof-Schöneberg Archive, visited in November 2022.

how the Turkish Bazaar came to be, I found it easier to contextualize it in space and time within the frame of the Berlin Wall, making the narrative of Turkish migration to Berlin and West Germany secondary.

The Turkish Bazaar was a statement of claiming space but also of creating a safer space for people of Turkish origin in Germany. In the 1980s, xenophobic and racist attacks against “non-Germans” were on the rise and, in many cases, directed towards the population of Turkish origin (Zeppenfeld, 2021). In a 1984 article in the *New York Times*, Ehmet Tutkoli, the owner of a shoeshine stand at the Turkish Bazaar, alluded to the hostility of the time in Germany: “We were invited in by these Germans when they had a need for us. They made full use of us to build their economy, and now they want to kick us out. They are making life extremely unpleasant for us here” (Gupte, 1984) (Figs. 4-5).

Outside of the Archives

On its own, the archival material of the space itself didn't provide a comprehensive picture of the social relationships in the Turkish Bazaar. It needed assembling, processing and interpretation. The hundreds of photographs, documents, articles, postcards and videoclips of the bazaar mean little without relating them to one another, and to other individuals and spaces outside of the archive. The philosopher Kate Abrahamson describes successful acts of gaslighting as forms of “existential silencing” (Abrahamson, 2024). To turn the silencing of gaslighting into confirmation and the sharing of new stories, I created a model to expand the conversation into other areas. As Trouillot wrote, “Historical representations ... cannot be conceived only as vehicles for the transmission of knowledge. They must establish some relation to that knowledge” (Trouillot, 1995).

Archival and copyright restrictions limit the possibility to share, distribute or copy many of the photographs and videos I found in archival collections. However, by interpreting them as inputs to create an architectural model, I used architecture as a tool to create something with the possibility

of engaging in new dialogues and conversations.⁷ Habitually, architectural models are a tool for representation of what is there or what will be done. The Turkish Bazaar model worked as a trigger for histories and memories, which influence and complement the ever-changing model; it is a continuous dialogue against the silencing of gaslighting.

The making of the digital model was only an entry point to talking about the Turkish Bazaar with people who experienced it. My paper stresses that this is a moment in the history of Berlin worth remembering and including in city narratives. I initially thought of making a “counter archive”, an alternative collection of material for what is not found in the archives. But, the more conversations I had with people concerning the Turkish Bazaar, the more I realized that the model could serve as the carrier of meaning—an archive, if you like. A model meant to be used, morphed and contributed to, in contexts outside of anyone's control. It is not part of a space or collection but of an ongoing conversation: a process. While searching for archives, Audre Lorde's words came as a helpful warning: “the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house” (Lorde, 2007).

My academic access to collections and architectural skills allowed me to turn the archival material into an architectural model. Sharing such access and skills by listening and accounting for personal histories is critical to my research. Sharing stories that go beyond walls, windows and beams enables me to move away from the strict interpretation of the Western architectural canon by the Monument Preservation Office, a canon which has often ignored other forms of architectural production. Narrating personal histories can place the focus instead on the social reproductions of space. A multidisciplinary practice of architecture—creating counter archives, modelling and compiling oral histories—can bring into focus a new set of relationships in space. Furthermore, an “undisciplinary” practice can welcome

7 The model is available digitally at: <https://p3d.in/xOVOf>. A physical model was also built for further discussions.

an even larger network of people, media and conversations into the discourse, steering away from the dominance of aesthetic values.

The Turkish Bazaar was, above all, a space for assembly. It was “[a] niche for migrants”, social worker and educator Gülşen Aktaş shared in one of our conversations.⁸ Assembling a narrative around archival material is just a part of it. The rest, I hope, will continue outside of the archives.

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8 Conversation from event with architectural model at HUZUR Berlin, 18 April 2023.

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