Recovery from the war and the economic boom

7.1 Introduction

In the Second World War the inner city of Frankfurt was almost totally demolished by the massive bombing of the allied forces. The first scans were alarming. Most inner-city neighbourhoods had over 50% demolition, and the neighbouring districts up to Bockenheim and Sachsenhausen were in not much better shape. So, just as in Amsterdam, but even more evidently in Frankfurt, war recovery was the main challenge. Since the city had been deprived of most of its financial resources, inhabitants, and businesses, there was an alarming lack of qualified workers and capital to undertake urban recovery. In the light of this study, the installation of the West-German Central Bank in Frankfurt was an important first step towards economic recovery. Following the first years of post-war urban development that had been characterised by ad hoc emergency measures, the extension of Frankfurt as an economic node came to the fore in order to speed up the process of clearing up the ruins and building the new city. This chapter reports the analysis of the contingent coupling of socio-spatial regulation and local accumulation into a particular regime of urbanisation.

What might have been expected to happen, considering the point of departure in post-war Frankfurt, after the direct post-war sentiments had cooled down? Considering the industrial history of Frankfurt during the pre-National-Socialist era, the national origination of the social market economy and the designation of Frankfurt as the seat of the German Central Bank, one would expect the local process of accumulation to be characterised by export-based re-industrialisation and the hesitant outgrowth of the city as one of the main regional financial centres in Germany. Just as in Amsterdam, one would expect interaction processes at the level of the local state to be unproblematic, geared towards economic interests and private initiative, and based on accommodation and extensive urbanisation. The current chapter reports an analysis of the circumstances in which a regime of urbanisation developed that accommodated and facilitated fast urban and economic development, but ultimately led to heavy protests.
### Table 7.1, Set of hypotheses regarding the regime of urbanisation 1945-1977

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<th>Points of departure</th>
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<td><strong>Market:</strong> demolished economic structure – pre-war industrial structure – decentralised markets;</td>
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<td><strong>State:</strong> poor local government, dependence on private initiative – political urgency for socio-economic recovery;</td>
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<td><strong>Space:</strong> abundance of greenfields on the outskirts of the municipality.</td>
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<th>Expected regime of urbanisation</th>
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<td><strong>Market:</strong> extensive industrialisation – hesitant surfacing of a banking cluster</td>
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<td><strong>State:</strong> subordination electoralism to economic recovery – national macro-economic growth politics – private sector led urban development – local politics of accommodation;</td>
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<td><strong>Space:</strong> urban reindustrialisation – extension of main auto-oriented infrastructures – extensive housing accommodation.</td>
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7.2 1945-1950: A city rising out of the ruins

*Assessing the war damage and starting redevelopment*

In the first post-war years urban development and urban planning practice in Frankfurt were completely dominated by the need to clean up the ruined inner city,¹ to restore the demolished vital infrastructural nodes and axes, and to reflect on the future form and function of the city. The first two tasks, although complicated because of practical difficulties, could be dealt with straightforwardly: the damage caused by the bombing had to be examined and the urgency of the long list of necessary recovery activities determined. Then, the question of how to organise the removal of debris and the subsequent rebuilding would have to be addressed in face of the difficulties of a diminished labour force, few financial resources or raw materials, and little equipment. Urgent practical tasks in this period thus stood in the way of providing a new and comprehensive plan useful for building a new city out of the ruins of the inner city, Bockenheim, and the parts of Oberrad and Bornheim that had been destroyed. In this situation there was only a small and uncertain basis on which planners could build their more long-term strategies. The day-to-day practice of urban planners was concerned with assessing damage and testing the legitimacy of requests for building permits made by private developers. To achieve this aim, the 1930 land-use plan (*Generalbebauungsplan*) was used.

¹ When this dissertation mentions the inner city, the area inside the *Alleenring* is referred to. The historic inner city – *Altstadt* – is just a small area inside this inner city, surrounded by the Wallanlagen (see figure 7.1).
Since the financial position of local government was poor, development was chiefly dependent on private initiative. This private real-estate development and redevelopment came rapidly off the ground, with many individual small-scale projects. Moreover, since most land was in private hands, the first public efforts were a complicated effort of finding the plots of land in the hands of the public administration or public companies, and debates with other government tiers and the Allies on the financing of these operations.

Next to these practical issues that constrained planning, there was also the issue of the perceived improbability of future growth. As Müller-Raemisch (1998: 23) observed, politicians and planners simply could not believe that a prosperous metropolis could rise out of the ruins of a destroyed, empty, and abandoned city. They envisaged a return to the size of the pre-war city; their calculations indicated that, with full use of the capacity available, this restoration would take at least 18 years. Because the city was not expected to grow, no land was reserved to house economic functions. Plans made directly after the War concentrated on patching up trade and the Fair. Directly after the War Mayor Blaum warned against utopian ideas of a future metropolis, with growth in all directions. He proposed that living and working should be kept together in spatial terms, and that sprawl was undesirable. These warnings, albeit inspired by the idea that growth was implausible rather than undesirable, quickly became important when it became clear that the piecemeal reconstruction went on much more quickly than expected and the need for a vision of the urban future grew.

Towards strategic planning for an uncertain future

Next to the practicalities of basic recovery that diverted the attention of urban planners away from strategic overall land use planning, the uncertainty concerning Frankfurt's future as a city was a major handicap for those in charge of thinking about its future built form. This hesitancy had everything to do with the uncertainty concerning Frankfurt's future role in both political and economic terms.

First, the future of Frankfurt in political terms was filled with doubts. After the War the Allies decided to impose federal structures on post-war Germany and to deconcentrate its economy. In 1947 the British and American occupation zones were put together to function as one economic area. Frankfurt was chosen as the seat of its Bizone headquarters (Bizonenverwaltung). Next to the fact that this

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2 The Bizonenverwaltung was the post-war German Government until the Federal Republic of Germany was founded in 1949.
brought with it the first post-war large-scale urban development task, it fed the hope amongst urban policy-makers that Frankfurt would be chosen as the seat for the West German government once the years of occupation were over.

Second, urban economic development in Frankfurt was plagued by an unfavourable point of departure and an uncertain future. The American occupying power had destined Germany for agriculture and industrial development was to be banned, giving Frankfurt, with its long history as a trade centre and relatively short history as an industrial centre, not much on which to build its future. Furthermore, after the War little remained of the economic structure of the city: the Allies had aggressively dismantled the big chemical plants and major portions of the motor industry, so that only small and medium-sized companies remained. Also, the imposed decentralisation of the German economy removed the possibility of Frankfurt regaining its dominant position as a trade centre, because only Hesse remained as its hinterland (Holtfrerich, 1999: 230).

The first few years after the War were mainly devoted to ‘survival’ and economic strategies remained a step too far. When in 1947 the need for strategy formulation became more acute, planners tried to pick up the pieces where they had been left before the War, following up on the 1930 Zoning Plan and the 1938 Economic Plan, both by Ernst May.

However, the recent pre-war history of economic planning in Frankfurt was ambiguous to say the least, so few clues remained for planners and politicians. Mayor Landmann, who wanted to develop Frankfurt into a south-German industrial centre in the 1920s, had met with opposition from local guilds and trade-based commercial companies who were radically anti-industrialist; they wanted urban development to centre around their own needs. Helped by a large round of annexations that enlarged Frankfurt’s territory exponentially in 1928, and which led to the incorporation of Hoechst and Casella’s suburban industrial sites into Frankfurt’s territory, Landmann, together with Ernst May, the socialist Master Builder of Frankfurt, was nevertheless able to back his ambitions with investments in infrastructure (Airport, Autobahn) and mass housing construction in the urban periphery without unduly upsetting the liberal capital-labour elite. Ernst May’s final

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3 The settlement of the headquarters for the bi-zonal occupation power was accompanied by the demand for 2,600 office units and 1,000 houses. These houses could not be taken from the those that had been made available for the inhabitants of Frankfurt, and therefore had to be new construction, with resources made available by the occupation powers. Since such a large production was hard to take on within the existing arrangements, the Frankfurter Aufbau AG was founded, which could operate free from political constraints.

4 The Morgenthau-Plan
overall urban zoning plan for Frankfurt, the *Flächenverteilungsplan* of 1930 (Siedlungsamt der Stadt Frankfurt a.M, 1930), was a vision rather than a detailed description, and as such was more concerned with dividing the limited metropolitan space over the various functions than with calculating exact future space demand per function. However, the plan laid the basis for Frankfurt's future urban form, starting from the vision that the city would become a dominant economic node and projecting a ring of new commercial and residential areas. In this economic climate, Frankfurt grew hesitantly as an industrial location, especially in the metalworking and chemical industries.

This short episode of industrialisation was cut short abruptly in the National-Socialist era in which Frankfurt was designated to become the city of German handicraft and its historic urban centre was designated to become a tourist attraction. Consequently, most industrial growth stagnated, except for the automobile industries (Ronneberger & Keil, 1995).

Strategic planning after the War immediately caused frictions to emerge amongst responsible policy-makers. The first post-war city councillor in charge of urban development was Miersch, and he set the tone as a proponent of practical, well-managed planning and development. Building on the idea that the redevelopment of the city should be organized along functional lines, he took traffic as the point of departure. Three points stand out (Müller-Raemisch, 1998: 31):

- A quadrangle of highways for through traffic, in order to unburden the city streets;
- New solutions for east-west and north-south traffic through the inner city;
- Proposals for the place where to develop new settlements to accommodate the possible future growth of Frankfurt, and to fine-tune traffic solutions with these developments.

*The first signals of urban growth*

Urban planning and development was a complicated, but successful undertaking: complicated, because of all the constraints planners and developers had to contend with; nevertheless successful, because the inhabitants gave the planners *carte blanche*. The urgency for the development of houses, schools, infrastructure and the like was so high, the citizens of Frankfurt accepted a ‘detached’ undemocratic and pragmatic planning style: all considerations on issues of urban development
planning were made by technicians in the planning office, and kept out of the realm of public debate. Initially, citizens were totally unconcerned: they saw practical progress, and that was considered a good thing (Müller-Raemisch, 1998: 166).

Because many of the civil servants who had already been in service before the War rejoined the planning office, this progress was logically inspired by the urban planning of the 1920s, when Frankfurt, under the auspices of Ernst May, had developed into the focal point of modern town planning and urbanism. Therefore, in contrast with the experiences in other German cities where totally new cities were developed, Frankfurt built on pre-war urbanism. Unsurprisingly, the two plans from this era, the Flächenverteilungsplan of 1930 and the Wirtschaftsplan of 1938 (Magistrat der Stadt Frankfurt a.M., 1938), were used as the backbone for the new plan the government of Hesse demanded. Of course, the overriding handicap in writing this future-oriented plan was the remaining uncertainty concerning future growth.

Some clarity on Frankfurt’s future emerged in 1948, when the currency reform with the creation of the D-Mark gave the local government some breathing space, the European Recovery Programme (“Marshall Plan”) provided funds for recovery, and the political decision was made to establish the seat of the German Central Bank (Deutsche Bundesbank) in Frankfurt. However, a year later, when the decision was made to make Bonn and not Frankfurt the political capital city of the West German Republic, the vision on future development again became obscure, since only the label of ‘economic capital’ remained, and the German economy was still in poor condition; the unstable foundation for future urbanisation remained. So it is not surprising that the 1949 draft plan was quite ambivalent on this issue, and shied away from describing the future form and function of the city, limiting itself to determining the permissible building altitude. However, within one week of this unfavourable decision for Frankfurt, Mayor Kolb formulated the new task for the city: to return to its true nature of a trade, banking, and industrial centre.

7.3 1950-1960: The transition to growth politics

The ‘Social Market Economy’ of Ehrhard and Müller-Armack

In 1949 the Federal Republic of Germany was constituted. Konrad Adenauer was the leader and he decided to develop the seat of the federal government in Bonn, not Frankfurt. The newly constituted government was facing the same tasks as those described for Frankfurt: the country’s economy was in ruins, and the means
of production that had survived the War had been dismantled or taken away by the Allies. In order to come out of this situation, a middle way was found between outright liberalism and extensive state control. This middle way was given the name of the Social Market Economy by Andreas Müller-Armack (1947). A theorist of the Freiburg School, he developed this form of liberalism in conjunction with Walter Eucken. Müller-Armack became the Permanent Secretary in the Ministry of Trade and Commerce. Together with Ludwig Erhard, the Minister of Trade and Commerce, he became the founding father of German economic recovery politics. In the newly developing country it was possible to create and pass fundamental laws (such as the law against hindrances to competition and the law regulating the German Bundesbank) to organise the state and the economy following the concept of a socially responsive market economy based on free trade and private enterprise. This approach combined very well with the infusion of capital through the Marshall Plan. Full employment was reached by 1950 and was soon to be followed by the German Economic Miracle (Wirtschaftswunder), which proved especially profitable for the city of Frankfurt.

**First economic growth in Frankfurt**

After the first period of city clearance and restoration had ended, Frankfurt could redirect its attention to future development. Mayor Kolb invested heavily in his relations with companies in order to promote the economic climate in the city, to bring out the development potential of local business, and to gain the commitment of external businesses to the city (Balser, 1995: 193). To realise these intentions, he set up a small interdisciplinary department for economic development promotion in December 1949, with people from the City Council and other professionals, in order to strengthen the ties with the economic community and to create joint initiatives for development, with the emphasis on the Fair, the Airport, the motorway-network, and housing construction (*ibid.*).

Although the emphasis on private initiative and the political priority of making Frankfurt an economic capital was driven by the fact that there was simply no other option (Bonn had just been chosen as the political capital of West Germany, and public funds were too scarce to allow urban development to be undertaken without private involvement), the choice was fortunate. Frankfurt had lost its economic centrality in the final pre-war years, because the National-Socialist
Reign prioritized other areas of development,\textsuperscript{5} and cut off the infrastructures to the outside world (Eckardt, 2002). Nevertheless, economic recovery came quickly. First, industrial recovery came about more quickly than expected. The chemical industries in particular were growing rapidly, since they had suffered little war damage from which to recover, and could latch on to the German \textit{Wirtschaftswunder} that was becoming established. Between 1950 and 1952 the factories of Casella, Hoechst, Kasana, and CHEMAG all re-started their activities in Frankfurt and its outskirts, and grew quickly (Balser, 1995: 194-195), as did other production industries that had characterised pre-war Frankfurt, such as food processing, electronic goods, and metal industries (Rautenstrauch, 1990, in Eckardt, 2002).

In response to the 1948 decision to set up the German National Bank in Frankfurt, Mayor Kolb’s ambition to recreate the financial and trade centre function of Frankfurt was only reluctantly supported by the return of German banks to Frankfurt. Until the Big Bank Act (\textit{Großbankengesetz}) of 1952, the Allies saw to it that the banking industry remained decentralised at federal state level, like all the other industries. After the Big Bank Act, structural scale enlargements were carried out dividing West Germany into three banking districts, with Frankfurt situated in the southern district. At that moment in time, Frankfurt was still a city dominated by industry; the financial sector only employed 2.3\% of all workers in the city (6,931 persons), whereas industry accounted for 36\% of total employment. The main industrial branches were the chemical industry (with 18,000 employees), the light engineering and electrical engineering industry (with 27,000 employees), the clothing industry (10,000), and motor vehicle construction (8,000). The partial recentralisation of the banking sector did not immediately lead to the rise of Frankfurt as the financial centre: Düsseldorf, in the North Rhine-Westphalia banking district was a more important financial centre at that time (Holtfrerich, 1999).

However, the rise of Frankfurt's role as a financial centre took off from 1956 onwards, when the Big Bank Act was nullified in favour of the complete recentralisation of the big banks under their old names in the Federal Republic. In 1957, both the Deutsche Bank and the Dresdner Bank decided to choose Frankfurt as the main seat. Not much later, smaller, regional banks were allowed to merge, leading for instance to the merger of six regional banks for 'Gemeinwirtschaft' into

\footnote{Berlin became the financial capital of Germany through the installation of the German National Bank (\textit{Reichsbank}), and other banks followed, thus leaving Frankfurt. Moreover, the Nazi ideology caused the flight and murder of most Jews in Frankfurt; it was they who had formed the backbone of Frankfurt's trade culture (Eckardt, 2002).}
a single Bank für Gemeinwirtschaft, which established its headquarters in Frankfurt in 1958. As Holtfrerich’s (1999: 253) analysis indicates, the years of the ‘Wirtschaftswunder’ (1950-1961) were characterised in Frankfurt not only by steady increases in employment (from 296,403 to 486,496), but also with a structural change towards modern industrial sectors and services. As an outgrowth of the development of Frankfurt as West Germany’s financial centre, many nationally operating banks set up their headquarters in the city.

Since this development was exactly what politicians had envisaged, not the slightest obstacle was put in the way of the banks. Rather the contrary; the urban expansion that was the result of this economic growth was hardly regulated. Banks were more or less given carte blanche and urban development was led by economic interests rather than an urbanistic vision. Since nobody doubted, let alone challenged the necessity of unlimited economic growth, the main problem for urban development politics in this era shifted from clearance and recovery to providing a well-functioning infrastructure for economic production and daily life.

The heyday of urban (re)development - infrastructure, housing, and the first office building boom

In 1951, the Department of Traffic and Economic Development declared that Frankfurt was one of the cities of Germany with the lowest unemployment figures. Moreover, as we saw, the financial sector was growing rapidly, a development that went hand in hand with a demand for offices. As a result, 25,000 construction workers were constantly employed in Frankfurt, and between 1947 and 1951 half a billion DM were invested in buildings with an economic function, such as offices, industrial buildings, and retail, but also in houses (Müller-Raemisch, 1998: 52-53).

Three main elements guided urban development during these years:

1. Continuation of major infrastructure improvement and development;
2. Large-scale development of housing sites in the urban periphery;
3. Office development as a vehicle for inner city recovery.

First, the 1950s was the decade in which investments in infrastructure were undertaken with particular tenacity, because it was clear that a well-functioning infrastructure network was the backbone of the further development of Frankfurt. The bridges over the river Main were restored (the Friedensbrücke in the inner city, for instance), and as the debris was removed in the inner city from 1950, tangential and radial streets quickly came back into use from 1953 onwards, together with the development of the multi-storey car parks that became indispensable when car
usage rose beyond all expectations. The number of daily commuters also grew. The first multi-storey car park was opened in 1956, at the Hauptwache. Bigger (national) motorways were constructed in order to facilitate the fast exchange between national, regional, and local infrastructures, strengthening the supra-regional position of Frankfurt. In 1956 for instance, the Frankfurter Kreuz, Germany’s biggest motorway intersection (where the east-west and north-south main motorways intersect) was ready, followed in 1962 by the opening of the Hamburg - Frankfurt - Basel motorway.

In addition to the development of the infrastructure for private transport, the development of public transport was also undertaken with great vigour. After the re-development of the Central Railway Station (that was taken into use again in December 1952), the recovery and further development of the tram system was a quick success, and the planning of the metro-railway was undertaken in July 1961. The traffic department created in 1959 in order to overcome the piecemeal restructuring of the transport networks could not avoid a situation in which, soon after every improvement, the newly-created traffic capacity overreached its own boundaries. The traffic-planning department, which had been situated inside the planning department, became independent in 1961 and developed a general traffic scheme for Frankfurt, which was accepted by the City Council in November 1962. The scheme consisted of three fast ‘city-rings’, where the supra-local traffic could be assembled from the planned main city roads. Moreover, the scheme integrated the metro-plans and the street-tram structures in a technocratic plan.

Next to these developments, the planning and development of the Airport, situated to the southwest of the city of Frankfurt, some 15 kilometres from the inner city, was taken up in this period. Because Frankfurt Airport was the first operational airport in Germany after the War, it had a competitive advantage over other German airports. In December 1949, the second runway became operational and plans were quickly made to enlarge the small entrance building. Air traffic grew rapidly, so Frankfurt, as the main German airport, soon realised that it had to develop further. Therefore, in 1954, the private company FAG (Flughafen Frankfurt/Main Aktiengesellschaft) was founded with the Land Hesse, the city of Frankfurt, and the German Federal Government as founders (and stockholders). The company was responsible for the maintenance and further development of the airport. This was supported by the development of new runways and the fast

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6 Müller Raemisch (1998: 73) calculated that in 1953, Frankfurt accommodated 52,200 motor vehicles, and that this number rose to 120,000 by 1960.
growth of Lufthansa that was founded in 1955 and chose Frankfurt as its main base (compare Freund, 2002: 95).

Second, the 1950s was also the decade of the characteristic large-scale development of new residential settlements in the urban periphery. Combined with smaller scale housing projects in the inner city, this peripheral development led to a boom in housing production in the early 1950s with over 5,000 new dwellings built each year, primarily in greenfield construction areas at the edges of the city. New construction was mainly carried out on land that was in the hands of the local government, or one of the many not-for-profit private housing associations. The detailed zoning plans made it clear to the housing authorities where future residential districts would be permitted. Supported by the acquirement and compulsory purchase laws of the Government of the State of Hesse, the housing associations were able to develop within the municipality of Frankfurt more than 50 new districts, varying in size from 500 to 1,500 dwellings and adjacent to existing built-up areas.

Despite this enormous production, which resulted in a total of 185,000 dwellings in the city of Frankfurt in 1956 (10,000 more than before the War), the housing shortage remained a big problem, since the city also had 70,000 inhabitants more than before the War (Stadt Frankfurt am Main, 2003). So grand housing development schemes remained a top priority for the Frankfurt City Council. As Keil and Ronneberger (1994: 151) observed, this practice of ambitious large-scale housing development was carried out throughout the region near old village cores, which caused the development of a multi-nodal metropolitan area, as opposed to uniform urban sprawl with the single-family-home ribbon development that is the result of large-scale urban development in many American cities.

The exponent of all large-scale housing projects in Siedlungen was the Nordweststadt, a new city district at the North-western edge of the municipality of Frankfurt that was also the last settlement of its kind. Space for large-scale development was becoming increasingly scarce, and two of the largest housing authorities, in cooperation with the municipality of Frankfurt, saw the Nordweststadt as an opportunity to create a new city district, which would not be fully dependent on Frankfurt for functions other than living. The plans were unfolded in 1955, but protesting farmers held up the final building permits until 1959. Within six years this new district was developed, and mass housing construction came to an end. In the years up to 1965, 35,000 new dwellings were built in Siedlungen and in the inner city, and the housing shortage had finally been contained (Gleininger-Neumann, 1988).
Third, there is the issue of office development. Although economic growth and the associated growing prosperity and employment was prioritised and welcomed, it also had its downside. In the eyes of many, the urban development practices in Frankfurt became the model of all that could go wrong under the pressure of economic expansion combined with the prevailing functional zoning logic. This resulted in a functional separation of urban areas, rigorous conversion of the traffic system for optimal automobile usage, and the growth of the office economy in the city centre and adjacent areas, which involved the pushing away of the residential population (Ronneberger & Keil, 1995: 292). Although the resistance to this type of development only became insurmountable towards the end of the 1960s, the first office boom in the 1950s also met with opposition, and can be said to be the forerunner of the developments in the 1960s, which are described in section 4.

The first high-rise office in the inner city of Frankfurt was built as early as 1949: Hochhans Süd, built by the Allgemeine Ortskrankenkasse and rented by AEG that established its headquarters there. Although the building does not resemble the skyscrapers of contemporary Frankfurt in any way, its 14 storeys towered over the surrounding built environment, and were a breakthrough in inner city planning and development practice. Encouraged by this development, towards the end of 1949 a consortium presented its plans for a 25-storey office building close to the railway station. Although this project was cancelled by the City Council, because its size and function were considered out of balance with the existing structure and function of the district, it gives a good indication of the high-rise fever that was enveloping Frankfurt at that time (cf. Freund, 2000). As discussed above, the pressure of office development on the built environment was initially not exerted by the big main banks, because of the economic decentralisation politics. It was mainly the financial institutions that were assigned special tasks on a national scale that took up the main offices from 1948 onwards (Deutsche Bau und Bodenbank AG, Deutsche Genossenschaftskasse, Deutsche Verkehrs-Kredit-Bank, et cetera) (Holtfrerich, 1999: 247-249). Not quite as drastic as the proposal by the consortium in 1949, but still making an enormous impact on Frankfurt’s inner city, were the many smaller high-rise offices that did obtain a building permit. Investors were mainly the old landowners who wanted to develop for their own benefit, which meant that they built a new office on their premises and exploited it themselves. The first demand boom of 1952-1956 followed directly on the Big Bank Act of 1952. Moreover, until 1952 there were standard prices for land, which suppressed office development somewhat, because the landowners were understandably reluctant to sell their land
if it was not financially worthwhile. As a result there were not many big movements on the land market, which remained characterised by fragmented ownership. Moreover, the first office boom of 1952-1956 was characterised by the absence of big investors: relatively high construction costs were hardly covered by low yields, making office buildings less profitable investments than they became later from the 1960s onwards, when the centralisation of banking business and the rise of Frankfurt as the financial centre of Germany set in.

The inner city was particularly popular among the financial institutions that were the main consumers of offices in Frankfurt. During this boom period, the requests for building permits for sites in the inner city followed each other thick and fast, which lead to complex deliberations on the future of the city. Since there was little public money available, the reconstruction of the inner city was dependent on private initiatives. This put the City Council in the difficult position of having to find the right mix of economic and social functions in the inner city, integrate them into an attractive urban environment on the one hand, and appease private initiative takers on the other.

The prevailing zoning plan (Baugebietsplan) for the area only permitted buildings up to five storeys, so each request for a building permit for a new office building led to new deliberations on whether or not an exception to the rules could be made, decisions that were repeatedly subject to debate. The discussions became increasingly impassioned and soon involved more than just the usual political spectrum. A headline in a 1953 newspaper is illustrative: *Frankfurt soll kein Manhattan werden* (Frankfurt should not become a Manhattan) (Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, 28-2-1953). However, the City Council was generally inclined to grant dispensation of the *Bebauungsplan* for the well-being of the local economy, while the highrises never towered above the Medieval Dome of 95 metres (Freund, 2000: 50). The criticism that can be levelled at this practice of exemptions and dispensations was that, as a result, the banks and insurance companies were making the major choices regarding urban development and not the planning department or the City Council (Ronneberger & Keil, 1995: 292).

Not surprisingly, the call for a vision on high-rise buildings in relation to inner-city development became louder. In 1953, the planning department came forward with such a vision, which had as a guiding principle that high-rise buildings should be concentrated on various important nodes in the city in order to prevent the development of monotonous streets dominated by high-rise buildings. In 1954 the city-planning department redeveloped its 19th century *Konzept zur Bebauung der Wallanlagen* (design for the development of the former city walls and its adjacent
Regulating Urban Office Provision

Figure 7.1, The Wallanlagen plan (Konzept zur Behandlung der Wallanlagen)

greenfields). The new plan aimed to preserve the Wallanlagen as a spacious green area in the inner city, while at the same time making land available for office development, because the pressure of developers on the Wallanlagen was rising. The planning department decided to grant permission for the development of offices in the green space surrounding the historic inner city as long as they were built at right angles to the green space. The development of offices on the Wallanlagen in subsequent decades followed these prescriptions carefully except in the western part of the city, where, at the Neue Mainzer Straße, the Banking District and the Bankenklamm (Banking gorge) developed in due course (cf. figure 7.1).

In the meantime building requests piled up in the planning department and one office building after another was completed at an unprecedented pace: for most buildings, the time from first conception to completion did not exceed two years. Although, except for important parts of the Wallanlagen, planned office development proved to be an illusion for Frankfurt and the practice of exemptions
and dispensations went on as before, for some time vulnerable residential districts were saved from the pressure of economic development. However, after the office development boom ended somewhere around 1956 and inner city redevelopment was practically complete, leaving little open space for development, office development continued on a fairly large scale. When investors started intervening relentlessly in residential areas to fulfil their development wishes, the resistance amongst residents grew, especially when uncontrolled real-estate speculation intruded into the Westend area with the tacit approval of the City Council. That episode in Frankfurt’s development history is elaborated in Section four.

**New dimensions for planning**

The German economic miracle had an enormous impact on Frankfurt – often referred to as Germany’s economic miracle city – since economic optimism went hand in hand with the development of new economic and urban spaces. Between 1950 and 1961, the number of inhabitants in the city grew by 150,000 persons to 683,000, whereas the number of jobs grew by 190,000 to a total in 1961 of 486,000. Table 7.2 shows the prevalence of employees in trade, banking, and insurance (TBI) especially in the city centre (where 94% of the personnel growth in these branches was realised), where the debris removal and new development proceeded at an enormous pace during this period, and the growth of industry that was concentrated in the rest of the city (65% of the personnel growth).

The rapid growth of the city made itself evident mainly in commercial real-estate based inner city redevelopment, the *Siedlungsbau*, and the speedy establishment of the Airport as Germany’s main air traffic node. However, this development also meant a quick depletion of the open space available within the municipal boundaries. Since the growth of the economy kept demanding more

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1 Because of the lack of comparable data, the changes in the complete tertiary sector, or total employment in the city could not be assessed (see: Stöber, 1964: 33)
space, as did the associated growth of residents and traffic, new solutions for urban expansion had to be found.

The new zoning plan, the first draft of which had already been presented to the City Council in 1949, may appear to have been a convenient vehicle for this task, but its ratification by the City Council, and later by the state government of Hesse, was plagued by the complications that the shrinkage of the available space brought to the fore. The makers of this plan, who set out to replace the existing plans that dated from before the War, were confronted with the task of finding space that was not really available. In contrast with earlier planning efforts, in which lack of space had never been an obstacle, the new plan had to pay every attention to spatial-functional fine-tuning. Also, local developers – backed by a government that was willing to let the interests of capital prevail – were speculating on new real-estate developments in residential areas. This situation put great pressure on planning efforts.

The complicated decisions concerning the distribution of the available space over residential and commercial use, as well as the re-zoning of residential neighbourhoods for commercial purposes, made the new plan a heavily debated issue in the City Council, because of the associated redefinition of property rights. The City Council did not ratify the plan and send it to the Regional government for official confirmation until 1956. The decision to allow the conversion of the Westend into commercial (office) use was particularly decisive for the course of urban economic development in Frankfurt. The ease with which the interests of residents were reasoned away was typical of the way in which urban development was decided upon at that time: the residents who would be driven away by commercial development were supposed to find new homes in one of the new Siedlungen that were projected on the edges of the city.

With the ratification of the new zoning plan by the City Council of Frankfurt in 1956, the old plans that dated from before the War were terminated. However, since official confirmation took until 1959, in the meantime planning and development was carried out without judicial backing. The everyday practices triggered a chain of events that led inner city development issues to get out of hand. As we saw, real estate developers saw new profits in the Westend and started to take up land positions, which was a new phenomenon in Frankfurt, where the landowners and/or end-users of the real estate carried out most development until that time.

Notwithstanding the many decisions made in the new zoning plan, the real issue of deficient space for urban development was hardly overcome. It was clear
that this problem could only be resolved in a supra-local, thus regional setting. Those responsible for the further development of Frankfurt's metropolitan area were aware of this, and many ideas with respect to its implementation had already been put forward in order to test the political and public reactions. Although through the years there had been regional planning on several topics, the really complicated subjects of regional land use planning, land policy, traffic planning, and investment planning had been avoided. Because of the tax system that favoured municipalities with many inhabitants and with many businesses within their jurisdiction, municipalities were inclined to plan 'against' one another, entering into competition over commercial and residential development. A practice arose in which the municipalities in the region developed new real estate all over the region, without any coordination taking place. Most responsible agents agreed that this was sub-optimal, to say the least, and that mutual planning efforts were needed for the sake of the future of the region. However, the same reasons that had led to the dense and uncontrolled urban landscape being built made the interests of all the municipalities involved diverge, so that the search for an acceptable solution became very complicated.

The prime minister of the State of Hesse, Binder, had already proposed more far-reaching regional cooperation in 1950. This proposal came to nothing, because of the animosity between the municipalities of Frankfurt and Offenbach. But the item remained on the political agenda and was given even higher priority by Binder's successor, Bockelman, who announced in 1957 that regional cooperation was the most important task for the new government. Most parties agreed to that objective, but the size and form of the organisation could not be fully agreed, mainly because such cooperation would interfere drastically with local sovereignty.

Because Siedlungsbau occurred not only in Frankfurt, but also in suburban municipalities, the whole region witnessed a remarkable growth during the 1950s. In the early 1960s the city of Frankfurt had already become the centre of a very dense metropolitan network, with a commuter percentage unequalled in other German cities. Because of the general trend of industries moving to the outskirts, the suburban flight of former inner city residents, and service industries remaining in the inner city, a regional city was developing within an institutionally fragmented framework. However, new spaces for old style urban expansion (the development of new construction on greenfield sites) were obstructed by the collapse of the search for supra-local solutions. Regional planning in the Frankfurt metropolitan area was considered one step too far by the municipalities concerned, so that the regional solution that was established in 1965 (Regionale Planungsgemeinschaft
Untermayn) suffered from authority problems, an inefficient scalar representation, and an overestimated belief in demographic expansion (Freund, 2003: 131). The search for new regional planning solutions did not end with this regional solution, but real planning had to be undertaken within the fragmented frameworks.

7.4  1960-1969: From boom to bust – the end of the miracle

Economic crisis and national political reorientation
The early 1960s were the last years in which the German economy profited optimally from the Wirtschaftswunder. German industry in particular profited from the combination of liberalism, peaceful labour relations through the system of codetermination, and the rise of exports (especially after the creation of the European Economic Community in 1956). However, this favourable state of affairs ended in 1965, when the first economic crisis after the War set in. Rising unemployment, imported inflation, and societal problems between trade unions and entrepreneurs with regard to the unequal distribution of wealth were the main characteristics of the crisis, leading to serious budgetary problems for the government, and the closure/downsizing of many German industries, which had an effect on Frankfurt.

On the national level, all this proved too much for the shaky coalition of CDU/CSU-FDP that was governing the country at that time. The economic problems forced the FDP to resign from the cabinet, followed not much later by Erhard, who had been the founder of the Social Market Economy and had stuck to his principle of a free market economy to come out of the recession. He was reproached for his passive attitude by the public at large, who demanded active financial and economic politics.

Erhard’s resignation cleared the way for the formation of a new coalition government with the SPD under the leadership of Kurt Kiesinger in 1966. This coalition, with Karl Schiller of the SPD as the Minister for Economic Affairs, introduced Globalsteuerung (overall steering) of the economy as the way forward. This combination of a free market micro-initiative, negotiations between the government, employers, and employees on shared economic policies and strict

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8 After the 1961 elections the absolute majority of CDU/CSU in the Bundestag came to an end, and power had to be shared with the liberal FDP. This coalition was very unstable and was plagued by disputes on the political course that should be set. In 1963 political turmoil led to Adenauer’s resignation. Erhard succeeded him, and did well in the 1965 elections. However, political problems within the CDU/CSU-FDP coalition remained concerning the future political course.
macro-economic steering through fiscal policy, monetary policy (the strengthening of the D-Mark), income policy, and international economic policy was very successful in guiding the German economy out of the crisis in the 1966-1968 period. The strengthening of the D-Mark proved particularly beneficial for Frankfurt as a financial centre.

**Opposition to technocratic planning**

Urban planning in Frankfurt had already became complicated before the economic crisis of 1965. The urgency for urban expansion that had generally been felt by Frankfurt’s residents in the preceding period was gradually fading away. Frankfurt’s residents became less appreciative of radical urban transformations and became more demanding. With urban space becoming scarcer, modern space-demanding city planning therefore encountered problems. These were caused by many interrelated processes. First, the growing demand for space by all urban functions, ranging from transport and the economy to housing, public facilities, and leisure led to complex negotiations over the future use of space. The rapid physical expansion of the city made it clear that the boundaries of growth would soon be reached, so that the task of deliberating over various possible future uses of space would become more complicated, with various interests struggling for control. Second, the economic miracle had brought about a growing prosperity for many inhabitants of Frankfurt, the German city that had profited most from the rapid expansion of the German economy. Associated with this newfound prosperity were new ways of life, which included a disproportionate increase in car ownership and associated increases in automobile usage and traffic congestion, a growing demand for suburban dwellings, and less willingness to accept the less favourable developments demanded by the growing city. And within the existing city, local residents contested plans more frequently than in the preceding decades, because they saw their quality of living being threatened by new developments.

The political dilemmas of a city growing out of its available territory were aggravated when the rapid urban development of the 1950s switched to suburbanisation and commuting in the 1960s. Although the number of dwellings increased to some extent during the 1960s, the number of inhabitants dropped, and because of the continuing growth of employment, especially in the tertiary

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9 This decline brought the number of inhabitants per dwelling back from 3.9 in 1950 to 2.6 in 1970.
Table 7.3, Urban development in Frankfurt – some indicators

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1950</th>
<th>1961</th>
<th>1970</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inhabitants</td>
<td>532,000</td>
<td>683,000</td>
<td>669,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dwellings</td>
<td>136,600</td>
<td>228,450</td>
<td>265,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment</td>
<td>269,400</td>
<td>486,500</td>
<td>538,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- tertiary sector (1)</td>
<td>131,650</td>
<td>274,900</td>
<td>332,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work related commuters</td>
<td>70,550</td>
<td>128,000</td>
<td>179,500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Air Traffic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- travellers</td>
<td>195,300</td>
<td>2,172,500</td>
<td>9,401,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- freight</td>
<td>3,900</td>
<td>46,900</td>
<td>327,300</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Krauß, 1997; (1) Services, trade, banking and insurances, traffic

sector, the number of commuters increased rapidly. The most pronounced development during the 1960s was the explosion of air traffic and transport, indicating the growing importance of the Airport as both a logistical node and a centre of employment. In 1966, this growth of air traffic and transport led to the first disputes over airport extension, when the national and state governments gave the green light to the building of an extra runway. This permit was rescinded in 1970, when the administrative court of Hesse granted the appeal of local residents against this extension. However, as the next chapter shows, the issue of the expanding Airport returned in the early 1980s.

With the first post-war economic recession hitting Germany, the City Council had to generate solutions to attract economic activities for the first time since the lift-off of the German economic miracle in the early 1950s. At the same time the City Council had to deal with a lack of available urban space and the growing self-awareness of local residents. Moreover, the large-scale infrastructure investments that had to make Frankfurt ready for the new economic era (such as the Untergrundbahn and the motorway ring) had been so expensive that the city's budgets were extremely cost-conscious. Consequently, since the tax on company settlement was the main source of income for the municipality, pressure on those responsible for urban planning was building up: as many economic settlements as possible had to be accommodated in order to fill the municipal coffers.

Lessons learned in the Holzhausenviertel

The first episode of office planning in the 1960s is a good illustration of the new type of growth-oriented politics that arose. Because the pressure of office developers on the inner city was taking on enormous proportions, planners looked for both relief spaces and an ordering principle.
The former were found in *Bürostadt Niederrad* (office city Niederrad) to the southwest of the inner city. In 1961, planning started for this monofunctional office location for 12,000 to 15,000 employees, and in 1964, the area was provided with the basic infrastructure. Most plots of land were sold quickly to firms that built offices for their own use, and who could not find spaces elsewhere in the city. In 1969, the projected office city had already reached the boundaries of further extension. However, because of its poor internal accessibility, its monofunctional nature, and its isolated position in the urban fabric, internationally important operating companies in the financial cluster were not interested in the location. They preferred the Taunusanlage and the Westend as a settlement location, and so the *Bürostadt* was unable to relieve the tension of the inner city areas. It became a settlement area for companies in industry, trade and transport, rather than finance (Freund, 2000: 54).

The search for an ordering principle was based on the *General Traffic Plan* of 1962. The arteries of public and private transport were considered the most important demarcations for economic development zones. The planning concept that was developed was straightforward: along the trajectory of the city ring motorway, a zone of 80 metres was allocated for the purpose of office development, with special attention for the areas where the motorway crossed the *U-Bahn*, that had radial arteries from the inner city outwards. These new high-rise buildings would serve a double purpose: they could accommodate the service sector companies required, and they could serve as buffers preventing traffic noise entering the residential neighbourhoods. But, in their drive to accommodate economic growth, the planners, officials and developers failed to notice social reality: not all the residents who lived in the buildings in the 80-meter zone destined for office redevelopment were inclined to leave.

So, while city officials in cooperation with investors made drastic reconstruction plans for the 80-meter zone, civic protests came to the fore. They were somewhat hesitant at first, but in the case of the plans for the *Holzhauenviertel* (cf. figure 7.2) that were sent to the government of Hesse for approval in 1964, the protests became more structured and persistent. They focused mainly on the unclear planning process, where the coalition of political authorities with investors was hard for civilians to break. When the new plans for the city district were presented, it was clear that investors in the area had already bought up large amounts of land in advance at prices applicable to the former residential use.

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10 For a more detailed account of these developments, see Müller-Raemisch, 1998: 196-199.
These practices rubbed the residents up the wrong way, since the impression emerged that companies were deciding exclusively on the future of the neighbourhood, and that these investors could make excessive profits on the basis of capital-sensitive and opaque political decision-making. Resident groups did not accept the fact that the municipality had rezoned the neighbourhood after many residents had sold their premises to investors. The residents objected to the new plans, but their objections were overruled by the City Council. This rejection was hardly controversial, but the indifference on the part of the City Council with respect to the trust and confidence of the residents was striking. It seemed that the City Council still believed that the residents would pack up and leave the area to settle down in the new Siedlungen elsewhere in the municipality and sell their properties to private developers, who were waiting for the opportunity to make a profit.

In 1965, the government of Hesse approved the plans for the Holzhausenviertel, and the residents, who had formed a protest group, decided to
take matters to court. What resulted was a complicated chain of individual bargaining between landowners and investors in which it emerged that the main desire of the residents was to sell their property at the highest possible price. The final decision only came in 1968, but by then it was meaningless, because the municipality and the protest group had already come to mutual agreements.

*The start of the 'Befreiungspraxis'*

In the meantime, the planners had long decided to undertake delicate planning issues differently. Because the decision on the future of the Holzhauenviertel was taken to court, the planners and local politicians lost their influence on the future of its development. None too happy with these developments, the planners, politicians and developers engaged in strategies to avoid such lawsuits in the further development along the inner ring motorway, and the axes and nodes of the U-Bahn. These strategies entailed an obscure game of manoeuvring between planners, politicians, investors, and inhabitants. The main goal of this game was to arrive at office development without having to lay the plans down in contestable official documents. The authorities were persistent in developing their spatial-economic office concept and, building-by-building, alterations were made to the design in the original permit. These alterations usually implied additional storeys and more commercial use.

This approach to urban development is in line with Frankfurt’s post-war tradition of the *Befreiungspraxis*. The pressure of capital on the built environment, especially of the Westend (cf. figure 7.2), was considerable. A 1962 municipal bill formalised the *Befreiungspraxis*: this enabled a decision to be made for the development of a piece of real-estate with a form or function that was outside the scope of the prevailing zoning plan, provided that the City Council approved the plan. This bill was enacted to create the possibility to be flexible with existing zoning plans when new and unforeseen development opportunities came in sight without having to cope with long and laborious processes to change the zoning plan (Müller-Raemisch, 1998: 205). This instrument took away the legal power of the existing zoning plans and made the development of high-yield non-residential office buildings possible. According to Giese (1977, 120), the political reasons for this Act were threefold: first, the German municipalities’ dependence on company taxes; second, the intention to make secure the existing jobs for the highly qualified, and to attract more such jobs; and third, the intention to develop Frankfurt as Germany’s main economic location (*Wirtschaftsmetropole*). So the
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\textit{Befreiungspraxis} was an important instrument for the City Council in its quest for economic dominance.

\textit{Speculative real-estate based growth politics}

Urban change was fast and relentless in the early 1960s, and became even more so in the remainder of the decade. By 1965 urban change had reshaped the functional and spatial fabric of Frankfurt into an even more pronounced configuration than that which had already developed during the 1950s. The former mixed use of the inner city had become even more dominated by economic functions, and slowly the inner city became a commercial centre that could compete internationally as well as nationally.

This rise of Frankfurt as a financial centre was an asset that the City Council was very willing to accommodate, especially in the light of the poor financial position of the municipality referred to above, which obliged it to raise the company settlement taxes considerably between 1965 and 1967.

In the light of the upcoming recession of 1966-1968, the City Council was inclined to join hands with banks and developers, despite the call for more democratic planning procedures by social groupings in the city that felt growing unease with the existing hierarchical and detached governing style of the municipality.

The city officials used the unrepresentative instrument of the \textit{Befreiungspraxis} with increasing frequency, and the impression that city officials were acting at will when it came to economic development planning encouraged the agitation amongst the affected social groupings. Since the most popular location amongst financial institutions was the Westend neighbourhood, the pressure on the Westend land market was intensified and the urban development practices of planners and politicians were increasingly guided by the search of capital for speculative profits. Not surprisingly, the growing unease came to a head there. The general plea for open and democratic urban politics that originated from the growing political awareness amongst large parts of the population slowly developed into more specific civic protests initiated to put a stop to particular practices of political manoeuvring.

According to the valid zoning plan, the Westend was a residential neighbourhood in which only four-storey buildings were allowed. However, it had already stopped being a calm residential neighbourhood in the 1920s, when offices first appeared on the scene. Bombing during the War demolished an important part of the neighbourhood, but the Westend was not as severely damaged as many other
inner city districts. During the recovery period, the residential character was never fully restored, because commercial functions entered the neighbourhood. This change made the existing zoning plan obsolete. It therefore came as no surprise that the new strategy, voiced in official documents drafted by the planning department in 1964, talked about the Westend as the most appropriate city district to house the further expansion of the service sector. Because the Westend was mostly in private hands, the City Council was exposed to the will of the market in order to reach these goals. By voicing their intentions, politicians backed capital in their wish to engage in profitable commercial real-estate development. The rents on offices were considerably higher than those on dwellings, which made building new real-estate for residential purposes an unattractive option from a market-led perspective.

Politicians and investors had already taken up the restructuring of the Westend before the 1964 pronouncement on the Westend. Both the existing landowners and the large real-estate developers were interested in investing in commercial real-estate, but since local small-scale landowners and real-estate owners lacked the resources for such big projects, a coalition between big institutional investors and developers, backed by banks, estate agents, and politicians took the lead in this redevelopment.

In the tradition of land assembly – re-zoning that had guided the big housing projects in the post-war recovery period, the planning department waited for developers to assemble land (often including the real estate on it), before rezoning the plot. Anticipating a favourable decision, investors and developers started assembling inner city land on an unprecedented scale with a view to making large profits. In 1963-1964, this purchasing behaviour went out of all proportion, attracting investors who were mainly interested in quick profits: they aimed to buy the land, demolish the existing buildings, develop a new piece of real-estate, and sell it. Existing landowners and new developers quickly understood the benefits of working together, and started to calculate the profits that could be expected. Future profits resulting from this Befreiungspraxis were shared between the owner and the buyer/developer (Giese, 1977). It is not surprising that such tactics increased the pressure on the built environment and on the social fabric of the Westend, particularly since this was the focal point of such practices (in 1965, offices already occupied 50% of the space in apartment buildings).

These private transactions often had negative consequences for the local residents, who were confronted with the wish of the new owners of their property to tear down their apartment building in order to build new, more profitable, commercial spaces. Normally, these social consequences of urban development
practices are levelled out or controlled by the public sector. However, in the search for economic development led by real-estate development, planners were inclined to work with private investors rather than stand up for local, residential interests. The City Council’s apparent lack of interest in the confidence of the district led the inhabitants to move away, and the collaboration with private companies who were able to make enormous profits at the expense of the residents fuelled the resistance amongst the social groupings concerned. A series of ‘scandals’ involving the speculative development of new offices succeeded each other. One example amongst many: the Rhein-Main-Center that was constructed on the Bockenheimer Landstraße in the Westend area in July 1968 turned out to have a height of 80.45 meters instead of the 58.95 meters that had been allowed in the building permit (Krauß, 1997: 215).

7.5 1969-1972: Planning the uncontrollable office boom

Restless years
The end of the German economic miracle went hand in hand with the rise of protests against the activities of government at both the federal and municipal levels. Some restless years ensued for both economic and urban politics, with politicians finding it difficult to respond adequately to claims from the civil society for a less authoritarian/technocratic attitude, and to maintain a more open and responsive attitude towards the electorate. At the federal level, the big coalition of SPD-CDU/CSU that was formed in 1966 had 468 of the total 518 seats in the Bundestag, which made governing easy for them, but which also fed the unease and mistrust in society. The left-wing students, intellectuals and artists who had comprised the extra-parliamentary opposition that had been growing during the 1960s were worried about the lack of a formal opposition that was associated with the ruling parties’ huge political majority. In particular, when the coalition initiated the Notstandsgesetze, a law that broadened the intervention possibilities of the national government in cases of emergency (territorial defence, natural disasters, and internal riots), the extra-parliamentary opposition started to make itself heard. It was concerned about the seemingly authoritarian features of the new law. After the protests culminated in 1968, an important part of the extra-parliamentary opposition diffused into the political scene (SPD), in order to try and change it from the inside. Another part of the protest movement remained outside the parliamentary circuit and organised itself into action groups, peace movements,
even revolutionary movements. The new SPD-FDP social liberal coalition that had kept the CDU outside government even though it was the largest party had understood the message and fought for reform (liberalisation of the legal system, extension of the social system, and improvement of the educational system), but this reform was confronted by the CDU/CSU majority in the Bundesrat, who had to agree any amendments to the law. Of course, these difficulties only fed the unease amongst many social groupings, and the climate of protests against government intervention remained heated during the 1970s, especially when the government proved unable to turn the new economic crisis of 1974 around and unemployment started to rise.

The consequences of technocratic planning

The changed political scene was also felt in Frankfurt, which action groups made the focal point of many demonstrations. Urban planning and economic development policies were not spared from these protests. In fact, they were the focal points.

The planners' main concept for Frankfurt's urban development throughout the 1950s and 1960s was only indicative,¹¹ and took functional separation and traffic as the main planks of urban planning. So, while developing into the core city of Germany, Frankfurt also developed into a city of functionally separated urban realms, with the central office district developing in the Westend being one of these, intersected by an auto-oriented traffic system. The many impressive high-rise buildings that had been built left their mark on the existing residential neighbourhoods. For instance, the number of buildings more than eight storeys high grew from 50 to 150 in the years between 1965 and 1970, which led people to call Frankfurt 'Mainhattan' (Ronneberger & Keil, 1995: 292) and 'Krankfurt am Main'.

The urbanistic principle that initially guided the redevelopment of the Westend was entitled 'offices in the park'. In order to avoid strings of offices, openness was combined with high densities. The idea was to create as much open green space as possible and include many residential buildings as well. In order to repay investors for the restrictions imposed on the use of their land, the limitation on building heights was cancelled. However, this urbanistic principle was mainly architectonically inspired, and was not really a planning-tool, since hardly any attention was paid to zoning, building volumes, heights, and the like. Consequently,

¹¹ The 'gegliederte und aufgelockerte Stadt', which means approximately: a city in which the different functions are untied and divided in an orderly fashion into different urban realms.
the first years of rapid office development in the Westend were unplanned and
dependent on the place where investors had assembled enough land to make
development possible (compare Giese, 1977).

Associated with this urban restructuring was the functional development of
Frankfurt as a city of commerce, services, and finance. Industry was still dominant
throughout large parts of the region (with strong concentrations in Offenbach and
Rüsselsheim), and services related to these industries, as well as the headquarters of
industrial companies settled in Frankfurt (compare Freund, 2002: 140). Politicians
considered this relative independence of second sector industrial capital to be an
asset, especially when the economic growth based on mass production and
industrialisation reached a plateau towards the end of the 1960s and made way for
the first economic recession (Eckardt, 2002). So, despite protests against rigorous
functional and physical change in the inner city, politicians were still inclined to
host offices there and to persist in the already controversial practice of speculative
development in order to provide a strong infrastructure for economic development

It was not so much this prioritisation of economic development that fuelled
resistance of the residents and other social groupings in the city of Frankfurt to the
city’s planning policy; rather, it was the manner described above in which this
prioritisation became evident in the daily planning and development practices that
made inhabitants so wary of their politicians and civil servants. The results of such
planning were criticised heavily, as was the lack of an integral concept for the re-
 zoning of the inner city. Taking note of the developments that were already taking
place, the inhabitants feared that, without stronger government involvement, the
pressure of capital would cause a chaotic and detrimental restructuring of the inner
city.

The 1969 Fingerplan

In 1968, at the highpoint of the office boom and under pressure to develop an
economic land-use plan for the inner city, the politicians and the planners
developed a new guiding principle for future urban development. This image of a
compact, mixed use, urban city was translated into the Fingerplan (initially called
Grundsätze der Planung, ‘Principles of Planning’), depicted in figure 7.3. It had two
main objectives.

First, the massive speculative land acquisition by investors led to oddly-
shaped plots of building land, which made detailed spatial planning impossible. So
the *Fingerplan* developed a general spatial concept of office axes from the inner city outwards (along the *U-Bahn*) along which office development was allowed to take place (Taunusanlage, Kettenhofweg, Bockenheimer Landstraße and Oberlindau). The idea behind this spatial clustering was to present a comprehensible urban form, and at the same time to redirect the pressure from the *Westend* to other areas. The plan only introduced a basic ordering for future development. The actual implementation and development of individual pieces of real-estate was left to the detailed negotiations between the architects, the planning department, and the buildings inspectorate. The point of departure was that there were considerable amounts of plots of land available in the *Westend* capable of facilitating the expansion of the financial district that had already led to the crossing of the ‘border’ of the *Wallanlagen* (Stracke, 1980: 46, in Scholz, 1989). In fact, this meant that the *Westend* was given over to tertiary functions, and consequently, land prices exploded to 1,713 D-Mark per square metre in 1970 (Scholz, 1989: 55). In 1972, not a single remaining piece of real-estate had remained unaffected by the (partial) transition process (Stracke, 1980: 67, in Scholz, 1989).

Second, the plan introduced a tightening up of the *Befreiungspraxis* in order to overcome the questionable practices of investors and developers. The hope of the
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Early Westend office buildings in former residential streets

planners was that, through the development of this plan, the development market and the practices on this market would become more structured, so that calm would return to the real-estate development scene. This calm was essential, because in the era of politicised urban development, the legitimisation of planning goals and products was becoming ever more important, especially since economic development politics remained a central element of City Council politics. So, the ultimate goal of the plan was to legitimise planning practice in order to facilitate the City Council's wish to “host ‘global forces’ in order to claim a place in the rising interurban competition” (Eckardt, 2002).

Because the City Council remained sympathetic to the interests of capital, the Befreiungspraxis was now employed to make possible real-estate development that diverged from the planning principles set out in the Fingerplan. Moreover, the practices that the Fingerplan was designed to bring to an end remained the order of the day, even with the improved plan and planning instruments available. Investors persisted in buying residential real-estate, hoping to obtain a permit to tear residential accommodation down in order to build offices on the same spot. With the new procedures in place, participation, protests and even demonstrations by inhabitants against the new plans caused considerable delays, which led investors to house new people temporarily in the deteriorating dwellings at high rents. All this
took place, with the aim of eventual enormous profits, with the help of the City Council.

The Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend

Local inhabitants increasingly gained the impression that everything had to give way to the needs of business. The pressure of the service sector on Frankfurt's urban structure, especially in the Westend, was increasing spectacularly, and the seemingly lethargic attitude of the City Council upset many social groups. In 1969 the anger in the local society was canalised by the establishment of the Action Community Westend (Aktionsgemeinschaft Westend), which became the focal point of the social groups. In 1970 it organised the first of a series of protest marches and demonstrations as a catalyst for discontent, and soon the developments were unstoppable. Protests became more militant; protesters occupied empty houses, and were willing to fight for their right to live in these dwellings. After some time the protests became more general, when extreme left groupings, who were driving at the reorganisation of the total social order, joined the squatters in their protests (Müller-Raemisch, 1998: 219-220). So the social and political situation reached highly inflammable proportions.

The government was neither able nor willing to respond to the demands made by these social groups, and the efforts made either remained unnoticed, or were labelled 'inadequate' by the protesters. What, then, were these efforts? Most important for our analysis are obviously the attempts by the local politicians and the planning department to develop a new structure plan for the Westend district. The spatial concept of the 1968 Fingerplan, in which planning professionals visualised the development of offices in orderly rows along main streets, had proven to be ineffective in guiding the rapid expansion of the financial sector in the Westend. The practices discussed above at some length led to the intensification of commercial and high-rise real-estate at the expense of dwellings and open spaces. The newly developed structure plan received the title 'Clusterplan', because it proposed the planned, or at least ordered development of concentrations of high-rise buildings interspersed with zones of low-rise and high-density buildings necessary to maintain a certain level of identity in the urban structure of the Westend.

Urban planners designated some streets (the Bockenheimer Landstrasse that traverses the Westend, and the Mainzer Landstrasse and the Friedrich-Ebert-Anlage that form the borders of the district) as axes of intensification; some areas were designated as residential areas; some areas were designated as mixed areas, separating the mono-functional office axes from the purely residential parts. There
were some difficulties associated with the plan (Müller-Raemisch, 1998: 222). First, it had a weak legal basis. Technically speaking, the plan was quite progressive, because it proposed a new solution to the old problem of granting compensation to people who had been disadvantaged by planning decisions. This Planungswertausgleich had been the subject of intensive debate in the national government, but it never reached the status of official policy. Instead of this, the new plan required the provision of substitute dwellings when existing dwellings were demolished. Moreover, a halt was put to the Befreiungspraxis; no more exceptions to the zoning ordinances would be allowed. However, both proposals, which were put forward by Mayor Möller as the first concessions to the local community, were defective in a legal sense, and the proposed model was hard to achieve.

Second, there were complaints about the choices made in the plan. Residents, who were organised in the Aktionsgemeinschaft, complained about the diminishing amount of space for residential purposes. Then there were the landowners and houseowners, who complained that the limitation of two-storey buildings in parts of the residential zones made it impossible to build profitably. The dialogues between the planning professionals and the developers were highly complicated. The latter had bought a lot of land in the Westend on areas designated for commercial use in the Fingerplan, or outside these areas, speculating on the Befreiungspraxis that had been put to an end in the new proposed plan.

So, despite the quick administrative realisation of the plan and the quick acceptance by the Mayor and Aldermen, official acceptance of the new structure plan for the Westend awaited the approval of the Ministry for the Interior of Hesse before the City Council could officially decide on the plan. However, the planners at the state level voiced serious doubts about the legal underpinnings of the plan, since the existing law did not make viable any compensation for disadvantageous planning decisions. Nevertheless, the City Council decided in favour of the structure plan in January 1971.

The structure plan laid out the main elements of future development in the Westend district. What it did not do was go into the details of street patterns, plot sizes, and the like. For this purpose, a Bebauungsplan (Building Plan) was prepared. This Bebauungsplan is the only legally binding plan in German planning law. Because the new Bebauungsplan did not become official until 1975, and the structure plan had no legal instruments to prevent speculative developments, there was little change for the better in the Westend. Quite the contrary: from 1971 onwards, despite the fading away of speculative land purchases between 1971-1974 (Krauß, 1997: 224), tenants were evicted on a more massive scale from land that had previously been
purchased, and enormous profits were made by a small group of investors. Before the *Bebauungsplan* was officially established by the City Council in 1975, 150 objects in the *Westend* were granted dispensation from the existing plan, which meant that instead of putting an end to unplanned development, which was the aim of politicians and planners when they drafted the structure plan, the *Befreiungspraxis* had its heyday after the structure plan was made official (see Stracke, 1980 and Giese, 1977). These developments blew away whatever trust the inhabitants had left in the activities of local politicians.

So, the wish to restore the socio-political balance in the *Westend* and at the same time to bring speculation to an end backfired, and the residents thought of the structure plan as just another piece of evidence of the politics that they had resisted so hard. Politically, this failure caused a shift to the left on the City Council. After Kampffmeyer was asked to resign as alderman in charge of planning in late 1971, because of his failure to put a stop to the bad practices in the *Westend*, the SPD put the demands of residents somewhat higher on the political agenda by firmly voicing its new goal of preserving parts of the *Westend* as residential areas.

The SPD demanded a reversal in the *Westend* politics from the new alderman, Hans Adriann, whose first task was to develop the *Bebauungsplan* referred to above for the *Westend*. Because the wishes of the SPD to preserve the residential function of the *Westend* were hard to reconcile with the promises that had already been made to the investors who wanted to develop offices, this was a tricky undertaking.

**From Fingerplan to Regionalstadt-plan**

Land-use planning and office development became important political issues in the early 1970s, particularly when the inhabitants realised that the *Fingerplan* had triggered no changes to the benefit of local residents, and the attitude of planners and politicians when dealing with urban development issues remained the same. Rather the contrary was the case: in the light of the crisis in manufacturing, the emphasis in urban development shifted even more than before to the stimulation of the service sector and associated inner city office development. Because of both the lack of space and environmental issues, the further development of industry was relocated to sites on the edges or even the periphery of the city of Frankfurt.

The ideas regarding the *Regionalstadt* (regional city) were in line with this persistence of traditional views on urban development. These ideas were developed by the urban planning department from 1968 onwards and promoted politically under the auspices of Mayor Walter Möller, who became Mayor of Frankfurt in 1970. The *Regionalstadt* was presented as the answer to the problem of regional
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government that had been debated unproductively in the Hesse parliament since 1965. This long debate had been dominated by proposals from the CDU, who envisaged the partitioning of Hesse in uniform regions (*Grosskreise*) and fundamentally enlarged municipalities. Möller used the idea of the regional city, which he envisaged as a single institutional unit, following the example of Berlin and Hamburg. He therefore brought forward Frankfurt’s vision of the new metropolis in order to give Frankfurt new room for urban expansion. Practically, this proposal entailed a substantially enlarged municipality of Frankfurt, subdivided into five boroughs with substantial discretionary powers. Only the authority over planning and finance, so important for the further development of the region, would be placed under regional authority. This arrangement would provide more freedom for development planning and more revenue for the costly infrastructure (Freund, 2003: 132). Of course, this idea was confronted by harsh resistance from the surrounding municipalities and counties who saw that this reform would “imply the loss of proper tax revenues and no substantial profits” (*ibid*). Frankfurt’s wish to form a *Regionalstadt* was perceived as urban imperialism. Surrounding municipalities and counties feared that Frankfurt, in its drive towards expansion, would swallow up their territory and competences and cast its dominating, monofunctional urban shadows over ever-bigger parts of its surrounding area.

The wish for a *Regionalstadt*, as expressed by Möller, did not stand any chance of being implemented. Not only had spatial economic relations changed under the influence of both the changing regime of accumulation, the slowly emerging internationalisation and globalisation of the economy; but spatial political relations had also changed, influenced by several interrelated reasons. First, the suburbanisation of capital caused the self-confidence of suburban communities with regard to urban development politics to rise. Second, there was major distrust on the part of suburban municipalities and counties of the big municipality of Frankfurt. This distrust was partly fuelled by the *Finanzreform* (financial reform) of 1965, which had made municipal tax income more dependent on the number of inhabitants than before. Surely, the central city was not proposing the enlargement of the Frankfurt-area out of pure altruism, neighbouring municipalities reasoned (Müller-Raemisch, 1998: 293). Third, the changing local political climate, as described in the previous chapter, fuelled the general distrust of the political elite and its inclination to stimulate and facilitate the demands of capital.

So, unsurprisingly, the discussions on the subject in the Hesse parliament were long and laborious, dividing both the various regional political parties as well as the fractions within the parties. The SPD in Hesse, for instance, the party that
held the majority of seats in parliament, disintegrated into a city-wing and a rural-wing. On the other hand, local Frankfurt politicians stood firm behind their ideal of a strong regional city. However, in the end, this Regionalstadt did not come into being. In 1974, instead of this fundamental institutional reform, the Hesse government decided in favour of a softer form of regional government, the Umlandverband. The Umlandverband Frankfurt (UVF), which started its activities in the beginning of 1975, was a multifunctional and obligatory alliance. Land-use planning was introduced with a concentration on transport, landscape, water supply, sewage disposal, and regional leisure institutions (Eckardt, 2002). Even though the UVF had the power to develop a Flächenutzungsplan, it was limited in its instruments for intervening in regional development issues (compare Freund, 2003).

The way in which Frankfurt’s local politicians dealt with the question of regional reform is symptomatic of their lack of feeling for the electoral base in the city. As Eckardt (2002) observes, it was not only the resistance of the regional neighbours that wrecked the plan for the Regionalstadt. Just as importantly, the citizens of Frankfurt had no sense of being a part of a ‘world city region’ and could not support Möller’s idea. That is not to say that it was the promotion of the Regionalstadt as such that alienated the public at large from Frankfurt’s politicians. Rather, the proposal was seen as a further proof of the course that the policymakers were taking, even after the problems in the Westend, and the first signs of the collapse of the ‘economic miracle’. This course was one of real-estate driven speculation and economic urbanisation politics, continued from the past twenty years of economic progress, but heavily criticized towards the end of the 1960s.

7.6 1972-1977: Stagnation, the SPD reign, and the Westend

The first political U-turn: from Große Koalition to SPD

As we saw, as a result of its apparent failure to deal with the discontent that was building up in society, with the most visible example the turmoil in the Westend, Frankfurt’s SPD-CDU Große Koalition (big coalition) that had guided the city
through the years of the War recovery and the Wirtschaftswunder was subject to opposition from both within and outside the political arena.

The city government was thus torn between the need to listen to the voices of both the declining economy and the rapidly changing social fabric of the city. Neither voice received proper attention, and the city government found it difficult to balance on the tightrope of compromise between the two. The SPD was a ‘centre’ oriented political party, with more affinity to centre-right wing politics than to left-wing ideals. Also, it became the post-war political tradition that extra-parliamentary opposition should not be invited to the political negotiation table. Moreover, the law was on the side of those who were in favour of economic development at the expense of the preservation of residential areas; since the German planning system draws on a tight legal framework in favour of order and justice, the valid zoning plans, with their opportunities for Befreiungspraxis, could not be overruled.

So, although the planning department seemingly tried to put an end to the capital-led transformation of the inner city through the Fingerplan of 1968 and the Structure Plan Westend of 1971, it was clear that: (1) both plans lacked the legal status to do so; (2) the daily decisions that guided urban politics were still instrumental for economic growth through the stimulation of office-related activities.

While retaining some sensitivity to the new demands of society, the city government did not wish to give in to the aggressive manner in which some parts of the extra-parliamentary opposition had backed with force their claims for more democracy in urban development planning. This awkward situation fuelled the opposition against the political establishment of the Grosse Koalition. Despite achieving only a small electoral gain (from 49.5% to 50.1% of the votes) in the 1972 elections for the City Council, the SPD won back the absolute majority it had lost in the 1968 elections. This cleared the way to the first post-war one-party reign, which appealed to the leftist forces outside parliament. They backed the SPD, in the belief that things would change, and that politics would be reformed, just as the SPD had promised.

Consequently the political landscape altered fundamentally, but Arndt, the new Mayor, was unable to change the mentality within the SPD, who had formed the ruling party for the whole post-war period. During this time it had continuously shared power with the CDU, which meant that deliberations on important issues

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12 Although the SPD had already won an absolute majority in Frankfurt during the period 1956-1968, political responsibility was shared in those years with the CDU, on the basis of a long-lasting sense of mutual cooperation, to create a strong city out of the ruins of the old city.
were conducted between the two parties, and then the SPD had to speak with one voice. In the new situation, in which the SPD did not have to share power with any other political party, the internal dialogue over issues became both more important and livelier (Balser, 1995: 339). It became clear that the opposing fractions within the SPD were hard to reconcile. Also, the claims of the political groupings operating to the left of the SPD created a new source of conflict over important issues.

The most important issue that the SPD addressed was the democratic deficit for which urban politics had been accused in the previous decade. Mayor and Aldermen were persuaded to engage in more active dialogue with the public at large, who were more than willing to let their voices be heard. Platforms were created to facilitate discussions on many issues concerning urban politics (Balser, 1995: 342). However, as we saw in the previous paragraph, tied as it was to the regulations and practices of the past that cast their shadows on to the present, as well as the need to stimulate the local economy, the City Councillors remained ambivalent in their choice between ‘new politics’ and old habits.

Even before the elections, it was generally believed that the lack of an overall vision of the future of the city made it hard for the politicians to take action against the Befreiungspraxis. The Bauaufsicht (Building Inspectorate) had only the old and often outdated Bebauungsplan for an area on which to base a decision on a building request. Each old Bebauungsplan included the opportunity to grant a developer exception from the guidelines in the plan, the Befreiungspraxis previously discussed. In the new political climate, fewer deals, more transparent government, and more democratic planning were required. So these Bebauungsplans were unusable and no longer acceptable. It was believed that, in order to develop Bebauungsplans that were more accurate and up-to-date, an overall vision should first be developed. So Gesamtplanung was re-introduced after a long period in which it had been considered unworkable. The development of a new overall structure plan for the inner city began in 1972. This plan was designed to divide the inner city into areas designated for offices and areas designated for residential purposes, partly to protect residential areas from the increasing demand for offices, but again, mainly to put an end to the Befreiungspraxis.

Drawing up the Structure Plan was an exercise in both ‘democratic planning’ and ‘scientific planning’. Detailed surveys, analyses, prognoses, and feasibility studies informed planners, who produced substantial documents in preparation for the structure plan. These documents could not be used in the communications with the public at large, and so the abstract documents were ‘translated’ into
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‘understandable’ summaries, and many ways of communication were used to engage in a dialogue with the public (Müller-Raemisch, 1998: 250). It became clear that the ideas of the technocrats/planners and the inhabitants diverged considerably, and the ultimate decisions on planning issues remained in the hands of a small group of insiders in the political arena and the planning department.

Because the ideas of the inhabitants and other social groups were largely dismissed in the final plan and associated projects, all the solutions proposed to overcome housing shortages, the economic backlash and the like were countered by militant protests. So, in spite of the intentions of the new City Council to engage with society in a dialogue and overcome the democratic deficit in urban planning, from 1973 onwards the City Council was compelled to suppress riots by violent means and carry out the house evictions of militant squatters (Pfotenhauer, 1988).

The Westend again the bottleneck of urban politics

At the same time the building of high-rise offices continued, but there was no comprehensive urban development process. Rather, there was a constant sequence of project-based disputes; the building of every high-rise building could be the theme of a lively story in itself (Balser, 1995: 347). When all such stories are combined, they hint at the rapid rise of a crisis in urban politics, urban planning, and urban development. This crisis became most apparent in February 1974. The intention to build an office tower at the Bockenheimer Landstrasse 111 and 113, first expressed in April 1973, led to an illustrative chain of events. First, students and squatters occupied the vacant houses that stood on the land where these offices were to be built, in the direct vicinity of the university. This action was contrary to the agreement with the Wohnheim GmbH that did not allow temporary occupancy in buildings designated to be demolished for redevelopment purposes. In spite of a distress warrant to empty the premises before 31 October 1973, the squatters, who were backed by certain social groupings that fiercely opposed the political scene, demanded a revision of the politics of clearance and demolishment. However, with their hands legally tied, and the moral commitment to the developers who they had persuaded to buy the land, the municipality decided to evacuate the premises on February 21, 1974. By that time the squatters had barricaded the houses, so there followed serious street fights with the police (Balser, 1995: 347-348).

The planning department was still in the process of preparing the Bebauungsplan for the Westend. This was a complicated undertaking, because the planners were caught in the middle of the conflicts between the City Council (that was on the side of the local residents) and the Mayor and Aldermen (who were still...
inclined to concede to the demands of capital, in order to limit the losses of the
city). Ultimately, the plan that was decided on in 1975 differed from the 1971
Structure Plan on various vital points, reflecting the shift away from economic
determinism and towards the interests of local residents. The number of residential
areas was raised at the expense of mixed zones, and limits to the quantity of high-
rise buildings allowed in the commercial areas were included. Building societies and
investors felt damaged by the new plan and went to court to secure their
investments that were now jeopardised by the new restrictions in the Bebauungsplan.
A lengthy process ensued, which lasted until the early 1980s, when the final
conflicts were settled by the city’s new administration. By that time, the political
climate had already changed fundamentally, and the interest of social and political
agents in the Westend had long faded away.

The second U-turn on the political scene: from SPD to CDU

Of course, the riots and the use of force by the City Council only fed the
dissatisfaction in the electoral base of the SPD that had hoped for new political
attitudes, a dismantling of the businesses-government ties, and more concern for
local inhabitants. These violent events also awoke the political spirit within the
CDU that had been moved to the opposition after the 1972 elections. After some
initial hesitation, their attitude towards the SPD grew more critical. As we saw in
the previous sections, the powers within the SPD that were oriented towards the
reform of the old ways of regulating social conflict still used some of these old
habits, such as making deals, Befreiungen, and the use of force. So defective legal
instruments and the need for acute crisis management obstructed the ideals of
‘more democracy’ and ‘culture for everyone’. The conservatives could easily
counter this new SPD ideology by using statements such as ‘ungovernability’

The conservatives did not have to look far to underpin these statements.
Examples could be found in all segments of government policy. As an example, the
deadlock that planning had reached was clear. It had become an increasingly
complex combination of abstract uncontroversial ‘overall’ structure planning and
the detailed, highly controversial development of Stadtteilentwicklungspläne
(Development Plans for separate city districts). Moreover, there was the Amt für
Kommunale Gesamtentwicklung. This Amt was initiated by the SPD in 1975 to
institutionalise scientific planning. Its main tasks were the preparation of
interdepartmental investigations of the housing market, employment trends,
models of regional organisation, and the like. The plans and studies that this Amt
produced were based on statistical data and scientific methods and were far removed from the day-to-day practice of urban development. Its intended and also practiced clinical, a-political and technocratic attitude made it an easy target for those who opposed SPD’s manner of dealing with an urban crisis.

In the elections of 1977, the populist anti-establishment campaign of Frankfurt’s CDU leader Wallmann proved to be a success, and the second U-Turn in urban government in the 1970s became a reality with the CDU’s unprecedented victory; for the first time since the War the CDU had won a majority on the City Council. This caused a revolution in the distribution of political power (see table 7.4), but also in urban politics.

### 7.7 Analysis: the structure of office provision and the regime of urbanisation in a booming city

As expected, the city government was willing to give economic agents considerable leeway in matters of urban development throughout the 1945-1978 period. This stability formed the foundation of urban development geared towards the demands of capital, in particular finance capital. Although the tasks facing planners were formidable, and the accomplishments of post-war urban development planning were considerable, planners took a minimalist position with regard to the extension of the unfolding metropolis. Urban development plans and public investments in the urban infrastructure were only presented to provide investment horizons for private capital.
Table 7.5, The regime of urbanisation 1945-1977

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Expected regime of urbanisation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market</strong>: extensive industrialisation – hesitant surfacing of a banking cluster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State</strong>: subordination of electoralism to economic recovery – national macro-economic growth politics – private sector led urban development – local politics of accommodation;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space</strong>: urban reindustrialisation – extension of main auto-oriented infrastructures – extensive housing accommodation.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realised regime of urbanisation</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Market</strong>: peripheral industrialisation – exponential expansion of the inner city financial cluster</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>State</strong>: big all-encompassing political coalition and exclusion of extra-parliamentary opposition – national social market economy and resulting economic miracle – private sector led urban development – local <em>laissez-faire</em> politics – grand scheme planning;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Space</strong>: extensive peripheral housing construction – intensive rebuilding of the inner city residential district and subsequent service sector led conversion – overall extension auto-oriented infrastructures – intensification of office development in the western part of the inner city</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less expected, but a bonus for the unfolding growth coalition, was the spectacular extension of Frankfurt as a financial centre that connected well with the politics of infrastructure extension and *laissez-faire*. Through its investment-friendly policies and the rapid outgrowth of Frankfurt into West Germany’s main economic node, the city government was able to incorporate local and national capital into a public-private inner circle of place shapers from which the public at large was excluded. However, at the height of its success, the outgrowth of the inner city CBD began to hinder residents in the inner city, who opposed the inward-looking urbanisation politics that were directed by a small local elite. This challenge to the regulatory regime shook the foundations of the long-term regime of urbanisation.

The years following the publication of the *Fingerplan* were characterised by growing polarisation, but not by the instigation of a new regulation-accumulation coupling. Land-use planning and office development were amongst the most widely contested issues. The policy of incremental and capital-led urban change that had been in place for decades was consolidated, albeit under a ‘planned’ disguise, communicating the message that the City Council was ‘on top of things’, and had an ear for inhabitants’ needs. However, in the light of the economic recession that was gradually setting in, the local state was not inclined to obstruct capital too much, in need as it was for the income (taxes) and new jobs created by new office development and the subsequent settlement of a company. Thus, despite the *Fingerplan* (and the *Structure Plan Westend* that was published later), the
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planners and city officials made room for office construction that fell outside the scope of the effective land-use plans more often than the public was willing to accept, thus shattering whatever remaining confidence the electorate had in the ruling elite.

The local structure of office provision

From the early post-war years on, office provision in Frankfurt had hardly been mediated by planning procedures. This situation was the result of the state of the city, which had been heavily bombed and was in need of investments because of the lack of public funds. Private initiatives were therefore welcomed and embraced. When in 1948 the decision was made to set up the German Central Bank in Frankfurt, the city took its first steps towards becoming Germany’s financial centre. In subsequent years, most West German banks settled their headquarters in Frankfurt, and their settlement was welcomed as a vehicle for inner city recovery. During the 1950s, these settlements led to the first small office-development boom. Because this was associated with high-rise fever, the first public discussions of office development had already come to the surface in 1953, when the fear of Frankfurt changing into a Manhattan-like urban structure first arose. However, the ambitions of planned office development on the nodes of the road and public transport network were smothered by the increasing pressure coming out of the structures of office provision.

These structures were twofold. The main investors were banks, who built their own premises. However, the development of the inner city of Frankfurt into Germany’s financial centre meant that developers expected high yields from office investments. Therefore, the office as an investment category was already hesitantly introduced in Frankfurt during the 1950s.

In the subsequent 1960s, the further rise of office demand, caused by the rise of business services in Frankfurt, the growth of regional industry-related headquarters, scale enlargements in banks through centralisation and mergers, and later by the growing international attraction of Frankfurt caused by the strong D-Mark, attracted more developers to Frankfurt. The growing concentration of big international banks in the inner city also increased the demand for office space exerted by smaller financial services companies. This demand triggered an enormous response from developers, who often undertook socially unacceptable actions in order to be able to engage in office development. Often, pieces of land were bought including real estate, which frequently had a residential function. The planning authority consistently allowed developers to build commercial buildings,
even though the assembled land was designated with a residential function in the prevailing zoning plan.

After 1965 the speculative assembly of land and the subsequent development of offices exploded, which caused increasing tensions on the land market. In this period these tensions heated up quickly and became politicised, particularly because of the circumstances in the Westend, which was the most popular area for developers. The crowding out on the land market in specific urban spaces intensified during the period between 1970-1975. This intensification led not only to the relocation of residents, but also to the overspill of back-offices to locations in the urban periphery (such as Niederrad), to the regional suburbs, and to the Airport. After 1975, the number of land purchases by developers in the Westend district temporarily diminished, because of the uncertain economic situation and also the uncertain legal status of the recent structure plan and land-use plan. However, because of the pipeline effect, office construction intensified during the second part of the 1970s.

Socio-spatial regulation, planning processes and the struggles over spatial imaginaries

The role of land-use planning in the processes of urbanisation and spatial regulation in the 1945-1978 period can best be described as a transformation from initial loose guidance of redevelopment processes, via the rapid politicisation of urban development, and the subsequent ambition to act more as a strict guide, to the eventual demise of these ambitions.

After the War ended in favour of the Allies, efforts were made to dismantle Germany's industrial backbone and decentralise economic life by introducing separate financial areas. It was therefore difficult for politicians in Frankfurt to envisage a future course of urbanisation. However, they did not have to think too long and hard, because actual developments overtook them. Within a relatively short period, Frankfurt had developed into Western Germany's main economic centre and profited enormously from the German economic miracle. The main building blocks of urban politics and urban planning that guided the city of Frankfurt through the 1945-1968 period were functional for the growth of the economy: extensive housing programs, large-scale infrastructure improvements, the improvement of the industrial structure, the functional separation of urban realms and private-sector based inner city development.

On the wings of favourable economic circumstances, and profiting from the enormous infrastructure improvements that had already been made before the War, the city developed into an (inter)national financial centre. Of all the West German
cities, Frankfurt was the first to develop into a service-sector dominated city: in 1960 over half the people employed in Frankfurt were in services (Ronneberg & Keil, 1995).

When the recovery period had ended, it soon became clear that further development of the city was not in the hands of the public planners, but rather in the hands of the banks and other investors. The political elite of the SPD and CDU, the housing associations, and the big banks had formed a local growth coalition that had a high degree of strategic coherence with national regulatory mechanisms with regards to the social market economy and the transition towards a more service-based economy. This formation of a growth coalition was a result of the detrimental financial situation of the city directly after the War that had made the city dependent on private initiative for practically every development issue, and also of the rapid rise of the banking sector in Frankfurt that attracted investors searching for openings on the land market in order to make a profit. Because the financial cluster had chosen the western inner city as its focal point, the development of this part of the city was made subordinate to economic expansion. The fiscal structure laid down in national legislation also triggered economic expansion politics, because the main source of income for the municipality was the company settlement tax.

In the 1960s, however, the first cracks became visible in the regulatory fix. The growth of the financial cluster and the scale enlargements of office users led to a rapidly rising need for new office space in the inner city; because the inner city of Frankfurt has only a limited surface area, offices soon appeared in the adjacent residential neighbourhoods. This invasion led to the pushing away of local residents. The laissez-faire attitude of the local government towards the investors made these companies the forerunners of the inner-city transition of residential neighbourhoods into office districts. In this way, banks remained somewhat detached from these transition processes, although they were triggered by the banks’ demand for office space.

Of course, these developments had their repercussions for the residential structure of the city. Many residents were pushed out of the inner city, and the rise in Frankfurt’s population came to a halt. Moreover, the selective growth in the service industries led white-collar employment to become dominant in Frankfurt’s inner city. These white-collar workers increasingly took up residence outside the city, in the developing suburban and peripheral countryside, so that the number of commuters quickly rose again. This put more pressure on the built-up structure, because automobile traffic had to be facilitated in order to keep the inner city
competitive. The downside of these developments caused the rise of social movements that could not be incorporated into the regulatory system. So, now that urbanisation of poor immigrants and the pushing away of inner city residents by the advancing financial district were added to the regulatory mix, the growth machine encountered problems. New spaces for accumulation were hard to find. The development from 1969 onwards of the office city of Niederrad was an attempt to create peripheral spaces for accumulation that could compete with the suburban overspill locations now that the rezoning in the inner city met more resistance, and free available space for commercial development was very scarce in the city. However, Niederrad proved unattractive to the big financial headquarters. Because the municipality's ultimate attempt to create space for development, the introduction of the Regionalstadt, was also unsuccessful, the political elite decided to operate in the way to which it was accustomed.

Not surprisingly, the regulatory system then fell into a crisis; the main driver was the resistance to the growth coalition of government and capital. However, the main carriers of the regulatory settlement, the developers and banks, remained in charge of urban development. Two reasons for this dominance stand out: first, the legal power to overcome the pushing aside of residents in the inner city by forbidding the transformation of houses into offices was limited. Second, the tradition of large-scale demolition and redevelopment was still running through the veins of both the ruling SPD and the urban planners, whereas the income generated from new company settlements was also welcomed.

The ruling SPD was thus forced into contemplating a split between the interests of capital and those of local residents that were hard to reconcile. Large-scale labour-intensive planning processes were started that had to raise the democratic principles of urban planning by involving the public in the development of new structure plans. At the same time, the processes of mass eviction, office development, and the pushing aside of the residential function by offices went on as before, and the police (instructed by the political leaders of the SPD) used force to throw out militant squatters. Of course, this caused a legitimacy crisis for the political regime that was now under attack from the previously supportive CDU (see Ronneberger & Keil, 1995: 293). This attack even led to a historic electoral victory for the CDU and the formation of new regulatory arrangements in subsequent years.
7.8 Conclusion: the regime of urbanisation during the *Wirtschaftswunder*

The points of departure for the first post-war regime of urbanisation in Frankfurt am Main were twofold (cf. figure 7.4). First, the city, especially the Altstadt, lay in ruins, and bombing and destruction also heavily affected the adjacent inner-city neighbourhoods. Second, the local and regional economic structure was dismantled and destroyed, and the Allies enforced the deconcentration of the German economy. However, the regional infrastructure that was developed in the 1930s formed a strong backbone for recovery, as did the many peripheral and suburban greenfields. At the level of the state, the most important characteristic was the empty government coffers on both the local and national levels, which made development dependent on private initiatives. The money that became available via the Marshall Plan gave some relief in this regard.

The regime of urbanisation that developed rested on the following pillars:

- The national politics for the social market economy that emphasised private initiative, supported by social measures with regard to (for instance) housing provision;
• The extensive infrastructure and Siedlungsbau programmes; The designation of Frankfurt as the seat for the Deutsche Bundesbank, the introduction of the D-Mark, and the subsequent gradual nullification of the policy of deconcentration of the German economy;

• The quick re-industrialisation of Germany and the Frankfurt region and the gradual and early transition of the central city to a node of service and banking capital;

• The fiscal policies that made local authorities very dependent on tax income from company settlement taxes and the associated local laissez faire and even a stimulating attitude towards the influx of economic investments in the urban fabric.

So, during the 1950s and 1960s, the influx of investments in the urban structure and the greenfields of Frankfurt was very strong. This influx led to an enormous rise of the number of residents, and also the development of a financial cluster in the western part of the inner city. Because the open spaces for development in this inner city were quickly filled in, the pressure of banking capital on the inner city residential neighbourhood of the Westend in particular led to a process of rezoning at the expense of residents and to the support of further accumulation. The problem of the growing scarcity of open plots of land ultimately led to the end of this regime of urbanisation, because the struggles over property rights at the level of the state led to the loss of legitimacy of the ruling SPD elite. The SPD was faced with an enormous growth on a limited territory. The initiatives to enlarge the urban territory through the introduction of a Regionalstadt were shattered, which made future intra-municipal deconcentration impossible. Because the inter-municipal suburbanisation of capital was not an option from a fiscal point of view, and because the law did not forbid the crowding out of residents by commercial real estate, the SPD saw no alternative to its politics of rezoning. This alternative had to be provided by the succeeding CDU, from 1977 onwards.