

Institution: University of Nottingham
Unit of Assessment: 30
Title of case study: Facilitating community engagement and cohesion around the sensitive process of memorialising the past in Berlin’s urban landscape
<p>1. Summary of the impact</p> <p>Research by Haase underpinned the successful renaming of one of the central sites of the new Germany – the Marion-Countess-Dönhoff-Platz in Berlin – in 2010/11. Haase’s research informed the politically sensitive consultation process between politicians and local communities, and within the communities themselves, and provided research that helped deliver broad-based community support for the new name. The research-informed community engagement approach facilitated by Haase’s research set a national standard of excellence in renaming processes. A permanent interpretation board contributes historical depth to locals’ and tourists’ experience of the Square.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research</p> <p>The research underpinning this case study took part in two phases. The first phase established Dr. Haase as the leading historical authority on Marion, Countess Dönhoff .These outputs are discussed in this section. The second phase was undertaken at the request of the District Berlin-Mitte with the specific purpose of supporting the politically-sensitive renaming process of the Marion-Countess-Dönhoff-Platz. These outputs form part of the Impact and they are discussed in in section 4.</p> <p>Dr Haase’s research (Nottingham, 2004-) focuses on the role that the foreign office and the press have played in the transformation from the Nazi dictatorship to West German democracy and the particular role of Marion, Countess Dönhoff and <i>Die Zeit</i> (3.1). His work demonstrates how and why foreign office and press elites have changed their very critical view of democracy since 1945. It addresses the transformation from the Nazi Dictatorship to Democracy (3.2), the “transformative field of the 1950s” (3.4), and the transition from the GDR Dictatorship to Democracy. (3.5) Dr Haase’s research has contributed to the growing research field of “Westernization” in Germany. This new interpretation emphasises the transformation of political culture after 1945. It has replaced older notions of the “zero hour” or “restauration”. Dr Haase has developed this interpretation with regard to three groups that were central to the re-orientation of Germany after 1945: journalists (3.1.), foreign policy experts (3.2, 3.3), and former social elites composed of nobles and others (3.4.).</p> <p>Haase has found that Countess Dönhoff is a key person to help understand the “transformative field” (3.3) of tradition, modernity and Western ideas that began to characterize West Germany in the 1950s. She was born in 1909 into a family of the so-called “ancient nobility”, kept her distance from the Nazi party, but fled from East Prussia in 1945 (3.4) and then pursued a career as a conservative journalist at the <i>Zeit</i> in Hamburg. Haase shows how her publications on the German resistance against Hitler (3.1), notions of “noble honour” gave way to more thorough reflections on the democratic ideas of the resistance. As a case study, Dönhoff builds naturally on Haase’s earlier interest in the foreign office and the transformation to democracy: she became a leading figure on various Western debating circles and these contacts helped her to win a leadership struggle against the less forward-looking editor of <i>Die Zeit</i>, Richard Tüngel (3.1). Haase especially analyses how her leadership position at <i>Die Zeit</i> from 1957 onwards was used to promote ideas of parliamentary democracy, anti-totalitarianism and reconciliation with Eastern Europe (3.1; 3.4). Indeed, Dönhoff’s publications helped to integrate more than 12 million refugees into German society and to develop a new idea of “Heimat” that bridged cultural affiliation with the former Eastern territories with a political affiliation with the “West” (3.4). In sum, Countess Dönhoff personifies the transformation of German elites that was vital for the consolidation of parliamentary democracy and Germany’s reconciliation with European countries after the Second World War and which is the central theme in Haase’s research.</p>

3. References to the research

Research that established Dr Haase as the authority on the subject (discussed in section 1)

- 3.1. Christian Haase and Axel Schildt (eds.), "DIE ZEIT" und die Bonner Republik: Eine meinungsbildende Wochenzeitung zwischen Wiederbewaffnung und Wiedervereinigung, Göttingen: Wallstein 2008. (Returned in REF2)
- 3.2. Christian Haase, Pragmatic Peacemakers: Institutes of Foreign Affairs and the Liberalization of West Germany, Augsburg 2007. (Available on request.)
- 3.3. Christian Haase, From Occident to Western Europe: Ernst Friedlaender and the transformative field of the 1950s in West Germany, in: Kevin Passmore et.al: The 1950s in History, Society, and Culture. Newcastle 2010, pp. 118-132. (Returned in REF2)
- 3.4. Christian Haase: "Um der ehrenhaften Erinnerung willen". Marion Dönhoff und die Medialisierung adliger Erinnerungskultur in der Bundesrepublik, 2013, in: Jahrbuch für Geschichte und Politik, 3, pp. 171-197. (Returned in REF2.)
- 3.5. Christian Haase, Christian Kraiker and Jörn Kreuzer: Germany's Foreign Relations and the Nazi Past, in: Contemporary European History, Vol. 21, Issue 1, 2012, pp. 79-93. (DOI: 10.1017/S0960777311000555)

Additional research on the history of the Dönhoff Square (discussed in section 4)

- 3.6. Christian Haase and Jörn Kreuzer (2011). "Deutschland kann nur durch Deutschland gerettet werden": der Kampf um das nationale Erbe der Befreiungskriege am Berliner Dönhoffplatz im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert: Online-Article that accompanies the Memorial-Plate Available at: <<http://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/1438/>>

Quality indicators:

3.1 Haase/Schildt: DIE ZEIT (2008)

The book has been published with Wallstein, the German equivalent of OUP in the field of modern history. The book has received outstanding reviews in several European journals and has also been praised by the former German chancellor Helmut Schmidt. Helmut Schmidt wrote to Dr. Haase in July 2013 after a private meeting that he "enjoyed reading the book [again]" that reveals so much about the press history of the Federal Republic. Comments by the academic reviewers include:

- Prof. Andreas Wirsching writes that the book "reveals the importance of the crucial turnaround of DIE ZEIT in the 1950s, when Marion Dönhoff won the leadership struggle against Richard Tüngel [...] for our understanding of the dynamic transformation of the Federal Republic between 1950 and the 1970s". (*H-Soz-U-Kult*, 2009-1-204)
- Dr. Wolfgang Langenacher writes that "the dense analysis reveals fundamental processes of change" ["erkenntnisreiche inhaltliche Dichte"] (*Publizistik* 2009 / 2)
- Dr. Henning Groscurth that the book is "outstandingly rich in the material that it analyses ["außerordentlich materialreich"]. He highlights in particular the two contributions by the editors Dr. Haase and Prof. Schildt that explore the research field and the newspaper's history in a "paradigmatic way" for the history of the Federal Republic. (*Medienwissenschaft* 2009 / 2)

3.2. Haase: Pragmatic Peacemaker (2007)

The book is the publication of Dr. Haase's PhD-Thesis which he submitted at the University of Oxford (2004). He was rewarded the Price for the best PhD-thesis of the year by the German Historical Institute, London in 2004. The book has made important contributions to the growing research field on German Foreign Relations and the Nazi Past. It has been cited extensively in the recent groundbreaking book by Conze et.al. on the Nazi Past of the German Foreign Office. (See Conze, Frei et.al., *Das Amt*, 2010)

3.4. and 3.5. Published in Peer-Reviewed Journals (Jahrbuch für Politik und Geschichte, Contemporary European History)

4. Details of the impact

Haase's research helped Berlin city council deliver community consensus around the

politically-sensitive renaming of a square in the city centre. The renaming of urban sites is a highly-sensitive issue in post-reunification Germany. Citizens have a legal right to appeal against renamings and this can delay developments almost indefinitely. The renaming of the Countess-Marion- Dönhoff -Square was particularly contentious. The Square lies in the middle of historic Berlin, on the Leipziger Strasse, near the Unter den Linden and has been at the centre of contests over the city's identity since the square's establishment in 1734. It was transformed during the two German dictatorships: the Nazis chose it as the site for the 'Aryan Birth Clock', to remind the population of their 'duty' to produce children. The GDR abolished the name in 1975 and declared the square as a memorial site to the victory of the Red Army in the Second World War.

When plans for the renaming were discussed in 2010, there was **significant opposition from both sides of the political debate**. Some older residents, mainly composed of former communist functionaries, rejected the renaming on the grounds that Countess Dönhoff was a descendant of a 'militaristic Junker'-family. In contrast, some more traditionalist citizens wished to re-instate the old name, arguing that there was no need to give it a specific modern and liberal new bent. But the renaming was supported by liberal-minded residents and had the approval of the elected representative for cultural and media affairs of the district of Berlin-Mitte. The renaming was also supported by such key political figures as the former chancellor of Germany, Helmut Schmidt, and the former president, Richard von Weizsäcker, as well as by members of main political parties, local businesses and leading figures of the German parliament, such as the then vice-president of the house, Antje Vollmer.

By the time Haase became involved, the conflict had escalated to the extent that the communists threatened to appeal against the renaming and boycott any ceremonies. In this situation, the supporters of the renaming felt it would be inappropriate to enforce the name-change – even if a parliamentary majority could be secured - and that it would be better to argue the case on detailed historical evidence. A member of the liberal resident association (IG Leipziger Strasse/Krausenstrasse) contacted Die Zeit due to the threatened boycott of the renaming by the communist resident organization. Die Zeit then contacted the Dönhoff Foundation, who recommended Haase's involvement. Haase was then introduced to Volker Hobrack, the elected representative of the district Berlin-Mitte. Local political leaders and the Dönhoff Foundation **asked Haase to undertake further research on the history of the square to inform community consultation** and to provide residents with historical information about the Square so that they could better understand the historical, political and cultural significance of Marion Countess Dönhoff and the Square. Haase's research helped to facilitate a **more democratic participation in a local community decision-making process** by using scholarly research to take the heat out of sensitive intra-community meetings and negotiations.

The further research (3.6) (undertaken by Haase, assisted by his research assistant Jörn Kreuzer), established the original and new location of the Square in relation to the former parliament and underlined the democratic significance of the Platz in the 19th century when the first Prussian-German parliament was erected there. It also explained: the square's history during the Third Reich, including the history of the birth clock and the history of the Jewish department store Tietz which was located at the there; the square's history under the German Democratic Republic (GDR) and the reasons why the GDR had decided to abandon the name "Dönhoff Square" in 1975. It explained how Marion Dönhoff's close friendship with Willy Brandt, the former mayor of West-Berlin, had underpinned the democratisation of the Federal Republic. In particular he clarified that the GDR did not abandon the square's name because the Dönhoffs were "Junkers", but because the regime needed to appease the Soviet Union and wanted to cover up delays in the construction of surrounding buildings by staging a spectacular renaming.

Using these research findings, Haase then **engaged directly with local residents** in a variety of ways: through a series of public meetings with the local residents' associations in 2010 (where he presented his results, distributed copies of his book (3.1) and made the residents aware of the online publication on the Website of the University of Nottingham in 2011) (3.6); through online discussion (5.1) and in exchanges with Count Hatzfeldt (5.2). With Kreuzer, he also produced a briefing document for district Mitte (5.3) and provided advice to the elected representative for

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cultural and media affairs for District Berlin-Mitte, Volker Hobrack (5.4). The effect of this community engagement was such that **the renaming of the square subsequently occurred without any serious opposition**. Indeed, there was a substantial turn-out (from previously opposed sides) at the renaming ceremony, when a speech was delivered by Dr Haase (5.6). A long-term result of the research is a memorial plate in the Square, which explains its history and can be read by the hundreds who pass by each day (5.5).

Haase's contribution to the process of community consultation in renaming the Square is attested by former German President Weizsäcker, who saw Haase's research as 'exceptionally interesting' [außerordentlich interessant] (5.7). Haase's work can be considered exemplary in its **use of research to underpin community consultation and to effect community engagement** with, a broad-based consensus on a decision. It was showcased in a recent book on the renaming of streets, places and schools in the historical centre of Berlin (5.8). Volker Hobrack summed up Haase's contribution as follows: "your research into the history of the Dönhoff-Square history was vital for renaming in 2010 / 2011. In particular, you made important contributions to illuminating the square's history, contributing to discussions with various resident organizations, setting up a memorial plate, and publishing a research article on the square's history. I was fascinated by the presentation of your results in your speech at the renaming ceremony in March 2011. The Marion Gräfin Dönhoff Platz is now one of the central sites of historical memory in the capital of the unified Germany. I was glad to include a chapter on the Dönhoff-Square in our recent book on memorial plates in Berlin-Mitte. The memorial plate, which is seen by hundreds of tourist every day, and the book are testimony to the lasting significance of your work (5.9)."

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- 5.1. References to the Wikipedia Web-Site on which the impact-discussion on the memorialisation and "history" of the Square took place. Contributions by the University of Nottingham can be identified through the name of the research assistant's Wikipedia account (Jörn Kreuzer).
- 5.2. Email-discussion with a prominent figure on the memorialisation of the GDR dictatorship
- 5.3. Briefing document for District Berlin-Mitte: Christian Haase und Jörn Kreuzer: The history of the "Grünanlage" Dönhoff-Platz (2011)
- 5.4. Email to Volker Hobrack, elected representative for cultural and media affairs for District Berlin-Mitte, which includes the historical expertise on which the location of the square was decided (4 March 2011)
- 5.5. Christian Haase and Jörn Kreuzer (2011): Memorial Plate: The history of the Marion Countess Dönhoff Platz.
- 5.6 Report on the renaming ceremony, including photographs of residents and politicians.
- 5.7. Letter by the former Federal President Richard von Weizsäcker congratulating Dr Haase on the research.
- 5.8. Presentation of the renaming as an example of national excellence in the book "New Memorial Plates in Berlin": Christian Haase (2012), The renaming of the Dönhoff Square, in: Constanze Döhrer, Volker Hobrack, Angelika Keunel: Spuren der Geschichte: Neue Gedenktafeln in Berlin-Mitte. Berlin, pp. 83-88.
- 5.9 Email from Volker Hobrack, elected representative for cultural and media affairs for District Berlin-Mitte, confirming the significance of Haase's work in the renaming process.