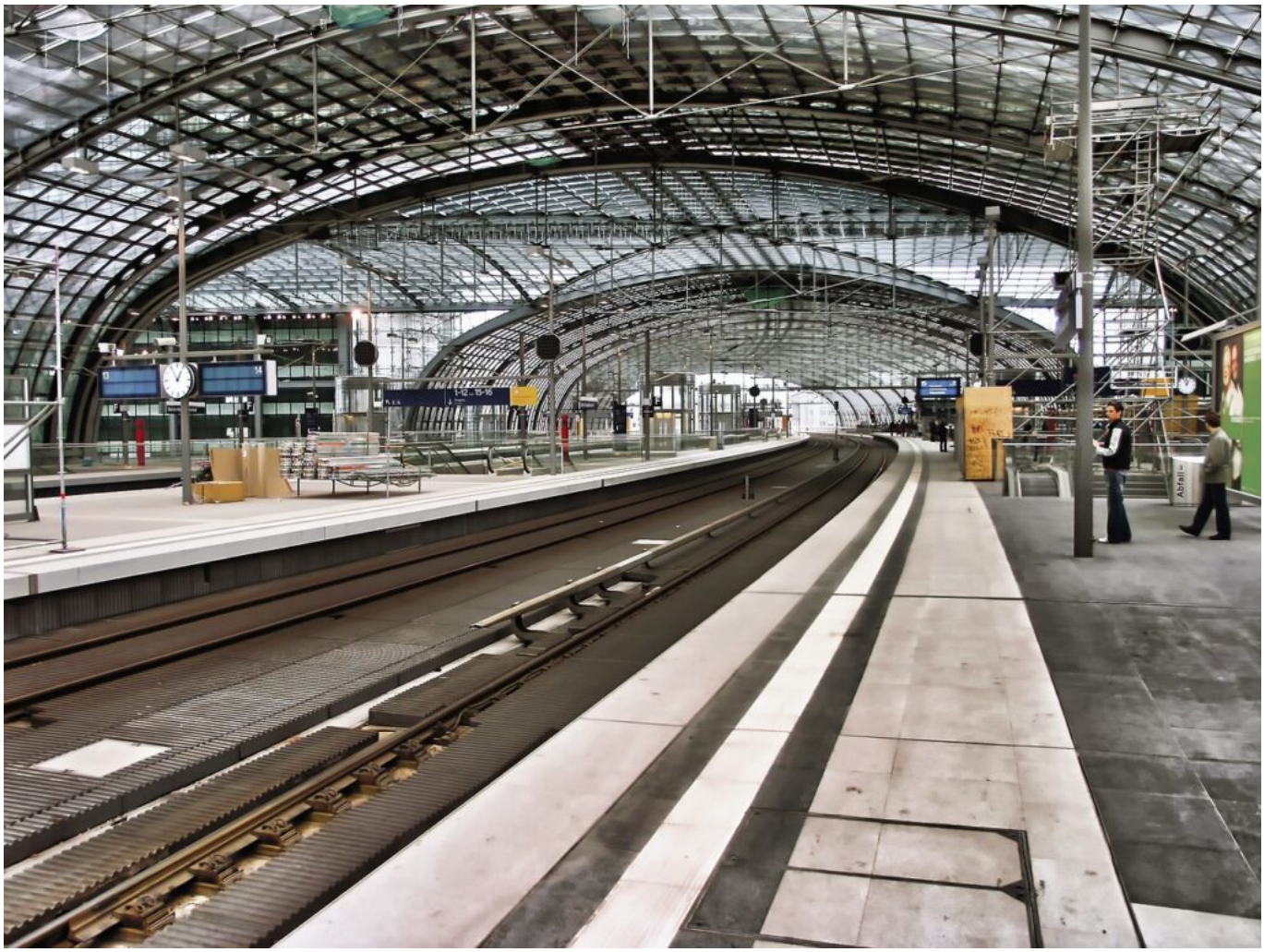
Now arriving in… Berlin

404 – Home not found



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After almost 2 years, I still haven't arrived in Berlin. I was, of course, aware that one doesn't just arrive somewhere overnight. After all, I know this process very well. During my relatively short life, I have lived in every corner of Denmark. At times, I resided in Belize. And I have undertaken countless journeys. Several of them for months at a time. Somehow, I have felt comfortable everywhere. Berlin seems to be the exception.

Actually, my life motto is that home is not a place. It is a point in the space-time continuum where I surround myself with good people. And where I also can find fulfillment in what I do. It doesn't matter if the geographical location bears the name Vindbyholt or Monkey River.

Nevertheless, Berlin really challenges this life philosophy. I find it incredibly difficult to feel comfortable here. It has never been so hard to find a connection point. Perhaps I am too unique for this place. Smoking grass in Volkspark Friedrichshain has never been something I could get excited about. Clubs and bars are hell for me. Rather, I find solace when I

form deep relationships with people. People who engage themselves actively and want to delve into something.

The capital of the uprooted

I have tried using Meetup to get to know people. I have only met very few of them. It seems as if everyone views this city as a stopover. Berlin is, so to speak, the mental transit hall of life. With most people I meet, I get a mental image that burns into my retina.
It shows the person with their mental suitcase already packed for the next destination.

Under these circumstances, forming bonds is difficult. Because we only ever scratch the surface of what should become a new relationship. In my two years here, I have rarely experienced someone appearing at a Meetup group more than once.

But friendships are built through continuity. To do that, one must be able and willing to put down roots. People here don't seem to want to. None of the expats make a real effort to learn the language. You can not even order a coffee in German.

Part of it is probably due to the commodification that is ever so present in capitalism. That trend does not halt human relationships. The misery of dating apps is a testament to that.
On top of that, Berlin seems to attract all the uprooted individuals. Historically, Berlin has long been a destination for bohemians and confused existences. There are few places where you can find so many people with so much emotional baggage in such a confined space. To an Anthropologist, this sounds intriguing. But it sure is challenging to live in.

To be fair, this situation has resulted in an abundance of creativity in Berlin. But it comes at the cost of stability.

Myself, I would like something in between these opposites. I need the stability of a steel beam. But I want that beam to be painted with street art.
Perhaps Berlin is simply a good city for people between 18 and 29. For those who still want to experiment and find their direction in life. But for moderate people at 40+, Berlin offers little space.

Berlin challenges my life philosophy

I need to admit it. Berlin is just a transit station for me as well. Perhaps I don't want to arrive here at all? In that sense, I am like most Berliners after all.
But if no one values their stay, it is little surprising that the city deteriorates. The infrastructure is crumbling? Every place looks like a party basement on the day after.
The mixed scent of grass and urine is also an unmistakable trademark of Berlin. Eau de Berlin, indeed.

I have given up on the idea that Berlin will be my home. A glaring contradiction to my life philosophy from above. Geography seems to have some significance after all.
It all comes down to the fact that we have to create our home ourselves. With our mental attitude and our values. By living according to our values and having people around us who share these values. In some geographical locations, this is easier to achieve than in others. Berlin is not one of those locations for me.