

History, Memory and the Becoming of a Capital in Late Modernity: The Berlin Case

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The paper explores the politics of memory in contemporary urban spaces. As anthropological and sociological research has shown, the construction of a city's text is an ongoing process which is powerfully structured by social and political negotiations on questions as to what and who should be visible. Out of this perspective – a city does not have a history which is visible as such, but rather history is made visible and, thus, conflict-ridden.

Against this backdrop, my paper will focus on contemporary Berlin: Since the fall of the wall, German unification and the decision to move the seat of parliament to Berlin, the city is undergoing a transformation process which occurs on both, a material and a symbolic level. Thus, the transformation is a conflict-ridden process, which is framed by the more general question of how to become a national capital and a cosmopolitan metropolis in the 21st century.