

# Introduction

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Since the fall of the Wall in 1989, Berlin has seen intense social, political, and cultural transformation. Berlin (West) lost its postwar insularity and Berlin (East) its status as capital of the German Democratic Republic as they fused into a center of influence in the middle of Europe. The New Berlin's reputation as a global city has risen consistently since the end of the Cold War and the concomitant shift of relations of power. Now one of the pillars of the European Union, the German capital faces its challenges with a diverse—and some argue inconsistent—set of policies and approaches. In the current political context, Berlin stands as a symbol for the perception of Germany as Europe's status-quo power that in the wake of Brexit will increasingly attract financial and human capital and expand its presence on the global stage.

From the postwar years onward, narratives, images, and metaphors forefronting opportunity and novelty have painted Berlin as an economic and avant-garde playground. Provocative monikers such as “urban frontier” imply adventure, danger, advantage to be gained in the overcoming of adversity, and a paucity of inhabitants relative to abundant resources. Deploying postcolonial critique more frequently brought to bear on earlier histories and Southern geographies, Christine Hentschel illuminates this phenomenon today. She quotes an “activist for creative newcomers” to highlight his way of seeing a working-class neighborhood of Berlin: “Neukölln's charm is that it is raw and rough. Like a raw diamond. One can still jump around, can realize one's dreams. . . . There is the space and you can still occupy it.”<sup>1</sup> Such wide putatively open spaces beg for exploitation and promise blooming landscapes of opportunity for the enterprising. Of course, as contributors to the invaluable anthology *The Berlin Reader* show in their analyses, this frontier is not void of inhabitants, but full of resistance. Importantly, the urban frontier concept, which expanded in the 1960s into a core element of city planning, is market-based and privileges economic growth. In Berlin's case,

it comes with a particular twist, because the integration of East and West Berlin uniquely maps a phenomenon that Saskia Sassen has noted in relation to U.S. cities: “[N]eglect and accelerated obsolescence produce vast spaces for rebuilding the center according to the requirements of whatever regime of urban accumulation or pattern of spatial organization of the urban economy prevails at a given time.”<sup>2</sup>

The “poor but sexy” New Berlin has undergone a rapid process of urban renewal that has significantly altered its central neighborhoods and its entire social and cultural fabric. While the effects are felt throughout, the impact of this gentrification is to date most visible in the central areas. Simultaneously, perceptions of what constitutes the “center” have and are continuously shifting toward quarters that were once considered peripheral—the former margins of Neukölln, Friedrichshain, and Wedding are now the new hot spots. Gentrification is also expressed and furthered by the city’s branding and “Imagineering” campaigns that spin Berlin as the city of clubbers, advertising and management consultants, designers, architects, restaurateurs, and contributors to the ever-expanding art, music, film, and literary scenes. Seen critically, these groups are associated with the plague and opportunity of urban accumulation and touristification and belong, in more general terms, to what Richard Florida has infamously termed the “creative class,” behind whose glitzy lifestyle images and practices often lurk economically dubious realities. The de facto economic precarity of many freelancers and startup workers reminds by extension that being truly poor may not truly be sexy. For those endowed with the wealth of their parents’ generation, their appropriation of a typically marginal label garners them cultural capital that compensates for the tangible commodities that they do not produce.

Contemporary Berlin is perceived to be a liberated place inhabited by free spirits, a central German outpost where raw urbanity still shines through. It is the meeting place of former dissidents from East and West, underground punks and political activists, conscientious objectors, alternative lifestyle advocates, and bohemians. Its gritty underbelly remains part of its lure and lore. Like the old West Berlin and the Berlin of the 1990s, the New Berlin still holds the reputation of a place that has not cleaned itself up completely and that remains a fertile ground for radical and edgy subcultures and for countless associations and communities that mobilize on glocal levels against the myriad effects brought about by rampant speculation, globalization, and gentrification. The New Berlin harbors enclaves of political, social, and technological disenchantment and a preference for physical over virtual realities. Increasingly,

artists who flocked to Berlin in search of inspiration, community, and a germane working environment have come to take on activist roles defending community projects and access to affordable work and living spaces against urban development driven by investors, politicians, and “imagineers.” Johannes Novy and Claire Colomb have found an “increasing mobilization of cultural producers in oppositional movements in an era of wholesale instrumentalization of culture and ‘creativity’ in contemporary processes of capitalist urbanization.”<sup>3</sup>

This volume probes recent developments and their inherent contradictions, including the tensions between Berlin’s creative city identification and its urban challenges, multiculturalism and Germanness, historical memories and institutionalized memorialization, slick surfaces of redevelopment and rough underground economies, forward-looking attitudes and nostalgia, and the uncompromising honing of radical edges amid concomitant institutionalization and domestication of squatters, subcultures, and other alternatively capitalized communities and geographies. In examining both the governmental and institutional strategies of shaping the New Berlin and the practices on the ground, this volume offers multifaceted perspectives that seek to intervene in and complicate official narratives and broaden the horizon of scholarly inquiry of cultural, memory, and urban studies. It brings together the expertise of scholars from an array of disciplines who engage their topics from interdisciplinary perspectives.

The contributions assembled here offer historicized perspectives on the ways in which participation in urban life and contestation of urban developments since the 1990s are negotiated by those who occupy, experience, and study the city. As Berlin scholars we are keenly aware of our own roles in the material production of the New Berlin, as well as in the production of signifying practices codifying the city as sign, metaphor, text, and symptom. In studying Berlin, many of us have been occupying physically and intellectually the “free” spaces, the “voids” available in the 1990s and the early 2000s and the gentrified spaces of today, thus participating in the very production of the space that we research and critique.

As a site of memory and memorialization, Berlin is, as Karen E. Till points out, “haunted with landscapes that simultaneously embody presences and absences, voids and ruins, intentional forgetting and painful remembering.”<sup>4</sup> The continuing relevance of these landscapes of memory lies in the questions they raise in the present. In the past twenty years, the “voids” of Berlin have disappeared at an unanticipated rate and speed and with them the “spaces of hope” for alternative urban re-

structuring with which these “voids” were invested.<sup>5</sup> As Andreas Huyssen remarked, “Since much of central Berlin in the mid-1990s is a gigantic construction site, a hole in the ground, a void, there are indeed ample reasons to emphasize the void rather than to celebrate Berlin’s current state of becoming.”<sup>6</sup> Huyssen is here referring to spaces vacated or destroyed in order to build the economic and governmental heart of the New Berlin. Uncritically describing as “voids” sites such as the terrain of the former Wall—the strip of land between the inner and outer walls—or the formerly dilapidated Gründerzeit apartment buildings in East Berlin’s Mitte and Prenzlauerberg risks forgetting their historical and contemporary meanings and the practices that shaped and were shaped in them.

The putative emptiness of the “death strip”—in which, moreover, protesters of gentrification and globalization settled post-1990—and the dilapidated buildings of central city Eastern Berlin—which many citizens, particularly dissenters, called home—testify to the economic and ideological schisms between and within East and West that still have not been overcome. Furthermore, mislabeling economically underleveraged areas as voids can legitimate re-focus on profit maximization. Consider why in the 2000s, a *Tacheles* at the site of the former Kaufhaus Wertheim with its bomb-damaged roof half-open to the sky is seen so differently from the *Gedächtniskirche* with its bomb-damaged “hollow tooth” standing open to the sky, although their conditions were both results of aerial assaults. Over the last decades, each of these less-than-fully-intact buildings was an integral part of Berlin’s and the national landscape. Today, the former alternative art and meeting space *Tacheles* sits barricaded, awaiting redevelopment,<sup>7</sup> yet the *Gedächtniskirche* remains a prominent memorial. The diverging status of these two locations indicates a very different perception of voids, ruins, or “authentic sites”—one that stems primarily from the ideological point of view of the stakeholder.

As Huyssen reminds us, human-made voids are created with particular intent and purpose: excavating what had been there in order to create space for the timely, planned, managed, and branded arrival of the New. Topographies understood to be caught in the past become “there and then” frontiers awaiting “here and now” plentitude.<sup>8</sup> Already in 1997, Huyssen found much of the hope invested in Berlin’s urban development misplaced. He speculated that “Berlin may be *the* place to study how this new emphasis on the city as cultural sign, combined with its role as capital and the pressures of large-scale developments, prevents creative alternatives and represents a false start into the twenty-first century. Berlin may be well on the way to squandering a unique

chance.”<sup>9</sup> This volume reassesses “the city as cultural sign” by probing the impact of urban development (Ward, Erek and Gantner), marketing and branding strategies (Sark, Kutch), image politics (Ingram, Janzen), imaginary cityscapes (Steckenbiller, Gölz, Schütze), debates of ethnicity and integration (Ülker, Schuster-Craig, Amit), and ideological battles for primacy of historical meaning and interpretation (Eisenhuth and Krause, Pogoda and Traxler, Kranz and Cohen). The contributions examine a wide array of debates, art works, texts, films, comics, and practices that reflect on the forces that have shaped the New Berlin since the 1990s. Framing their investigation in historical terms, the contributions examine how these developments are impacting perceptions of the city, as well as the experiences and lived practices of its inhabitants today.

Along with Henri Lefebvre we assume that all space is social space, a product of complex interpersonal, political, and economic processes. This volume brings together investigations that highlight the interrelation of the modes of production of what Lefebvre refers to as the triad of “perceived—conceived—lived” realms.<sup>10</sup> Lefebvre distinguishes between “spatial practice” (the way in which perceived space and daily urban reality intersect), “representations of space” (space as conceived by urban planners, social engineers, and strategists asserting scientific knowledge, governmental and professional authority), and “representational space” (the lived spaces of inhabitants and of artists, writers, and philosophers who describe, imagine, and represent it).<sup>11</sup> The differentiation between perceptions, conceptualizations, and representations of the lived city usefully reminds us of the “centrality of embodied experience to the production, reproduction and contestation of urban space.”<sup>12</sup> “Space considered in isolation is an empty abstraction,” because space is produced through physical, mental, and social fields that interact in a dialectical fashion.<sup>13</sup> In examining the functions of various urban spaces and experiences, including subcultures (Ingram, Sark); alternative spaces and cultures (Amit, Ward); monuments, historic sites, and cultural memory (Eisenhuth and Krause, Pogoda and Traxler, Erek and Gantner, Kranz and Cohen); festivals (Janzen); and artistic expressions (Schuster-Craig, Kutch, Janzen, Steckenbiller, Gölz, Schütze), the contributions to this volume reflect on a wide array of material, mental, and everyday practices that constitute and construct the social space of Berlin.

Resonant, too, for thinking through the constructions of Berlin, is Michel de Certeau’s differentiation between the notions of strategy and tactics. Linked to institutions, governments, corporations, and organizations, strategies aim at creating and maintaining regulations that support hegemonic power structures. Perhaps more loosely applied, strategies,

in the context of our volume, refer to policies that attempt to construct and regulate the “city as sign,” and several contributions examine aspects of how these strategies are forged and deployed (Ward, Eisenhuth and Krause, Pogoda and Traxler, Ereğ and Gantner, Ülker, Janzen). In contrast, tactics are created and deployed by users and consumers—literally and figuratively by those walking the streets. Tactics evade strict boundaries and may poach, oppose, undermine, and interfere with the order and structures established by the strategic exercise of power. Several contributions here examine tactics used to disrupt strategies and to contest dominant concepts, planning activities, perceptions, representations, and images (Sark, Ingram, Kutch, Schuster-Craig, Steckenbiller, Amit, Janzen, Kranz and Cohen).

In reflecting on recent transformation in historical perspective, the contributions highlight that as the “voids” disappear, the material traces of Berlin’s history turn into contested territory. Berlin as “palimpsest of different times and histories”<sup>14</sup> implies forgetting, filling, rewriting, and reshaping of memory and remembrance. As history is appropriated, revised, managed, and showcased, certain historical sites become monuments and certain historical events are memorialized, while others are abandoned. In contesting “forgetting,” appropriation, and economically and politically motivated erasures of historical and cultural memory, this volume presents a complex, multifaceted view of Berlin, a montage—to speak in Huyssen’s terms—and an affirmation of the “necessarily palimpsestic texture of urban space.”<sup>15</sup>

In choosing “cultural topographies” as a title to this volume, we want to buttress our emphasis on the connection between spatial production and historical memory. In using the plural rather than the singular, we indicate our commitment not only to plurality and the illumination of the heterogeneous character of the present but also to the continuing scrutiny of Berlin’s storied history as it manifests physically. The chapters of this book delineate an uneven and contested territory that is always also a work in progress. Topographies are not mere descriptions of places but refer to the spatial mapping and delineation of features and surface configurations.<sup>16</sup> Drawing on J. Hillis Miller’s concept of topography, this volume is conceived as a multilayered montage “like the transparencies superimposed in palimpsest on a map, each transparency charting some different feature of the landscape beneath ... the landscape ‘as such’ is never given, only one or another of the ways to map it.”<sup>17</sup> Resonating with Certeau’s “Walking in the City,” this volume maps a layered, fragmentary topography via un- and underexplored

pathways, writing the urban text much like the pedestrian in the city whose “intersecting writings compose a manifold story.”<sup>18</sup>

What is Berlin today? In asking this question, the contributions to this volume seek to understand the multifaceted cultural shifts taking place in contemporary Berlin within the context of its storied history. Berlin today still bears the open wounds and hidden scars of some of the most significant historical transformations of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. From Imperial Germany, the Weimar Republic, the Third Reich, the Cold War, and the fall of the Wall, contemporary Berlin is a metropolis of “ghosts.” A multicultural city with an as-yet comparatively low cost of living, a highly educated workforce, decent economic prospects, and engaged residents, Berlin has considerable potential and the opportunity to create a unique and inclusive urban environment that will foster strong local communities, equity, and civic participation.

While the New Berlin promotes itself as a creative center populated by a young, dynamic, cosmopolitan class of globalized citizens from all over the world, its economy is fragile; its debt load and unemployment rates are high. The city’s promotional and branding strategies are driven by urban managers and marketing experts who recognize and value creativity as it relates to the bottom line. In other words, creative endeavors are not thought of as alternatives to “extant market-, consumption- and property-led development strategies, but as low-cost, feel-good *complements*. Creativity plans do not disrupt these established approaches to urban entrepreneurialism and consumption-oriented place promotion, they *extend* them.”<sup>19</sup> Such reinvention of urban space has entailed the forgetting and deletion of certain marginalized cultural identities in favor of “sexier” urban pleasures: “Current conflicts over the right to the city in Berlin, especially those led by new social movements challenging neoliberal urban policies, often mask the endurance of old forms of exclusion as well as the formation of new kinds of dispossession. ... [T]here seems to be little reflection on the way in which [these movements] have also activated mechanisms of revalorization that have destabilized existing use and led to the continued economic marginalization and displacement of other groups, most notably East Berliners, migrants, and the poor.”<sup>20</sup>

Cautionary accounts of urban development are all the more relevant and urgent with the New Berlin having become a new home for nearly 80,000 refugees and asylum seekers in 2015 and with more migrants expected to settle or stay temporarily in the city in the next years. Like other urban centers and other parts of Germany and Eu-

rope, Berlin's most urgent challenge is not just to provide shelter but to find effective ways to integrate the newcomers and sojourners into the economic, political, social, and cultural fabric of the city. Institutions and many private Berliners have mobilized, trying to meet the challenge of welcoming refugees into the fold of urban life by offering language courses and vocational training, and organizing benefits and neighborhood events. Artists, musicians, and writers are founding initiatives to facilitate cultural integration of the new residents, inviting participation in and offering free tickets to cultural events. These initiatives take place amid fervent debates among Germans who doubt or oppose Germany's official immigration and refugee policies. Angela Merkel's famous "We can do it!" is often met with skepticism. Some Germans unconvinced by their chancellor's optimistic message ask how it can be done, while others angrily demand her ouster and the closing of the borders; violence simmers, and right-wing political parties and groups have seen considerable gains in state and local elections. Implicit to questions of "how" to facilitate the settlement of refugees are not only economic concerns but also anxieties about what is perceived to be an unprecedented challenge to German national and cultural identity. The arrival of 140,000 new residents within a two-year period of time puts Berlin's "culture of welcome" (*Willkommenskultur*) to the test while setting in motion yet another transformation of a city perpetually in flux. Marike Janzen's examination, in this volume, of the *internationale literaturfestival* and Jenny Erpenbeck's novel *Gehen, ging, gegangen* (*Going, Went, Gone*) offers a critical reflection on efforts to engage new arrivals to the city and interact with the refugees. Johanna Schuster-Craig's contribution provides a salient critique of the broader implications of integration debates, arguing for a shift from models of integration to models of participation.

This collection addresses some of the most salient issues facing Berlin, offering an impetus for reflection, further research, and debate about its present, past, and future in the hope that the newish capital will continue to be built on its resistance potential. Our contributors ask an array of questions, including: What are the social and institutional barriers hindering civic engagement? How do non-German residents navigate Berlin? How does the New Berlin engage the social and political imagination? How is Berlin represented and with which effects? What is distinct about its urban aesthetic and imagery? What role has Berlin to play in the articulation of a contemporary German national and supranational identity? All of them illuminate how particular cultural narratives about the city are deployed for concrete ends.



In the November 2016 special issue of *Seminar* on Berlin, we wrote:

Cities have long challenged, captivated, and inspired the cultural imagination of their inhabitants and non-inhabitants alike. In contemporary society, urban areas seem to gain importance in every imaginable way and are recognized as privileged sites. ... However, these urban narratives of ambition and creation are often undercut by material realities and ethnic, religious, and social tensions and are shot through with a myriad of thwarted aspirations.<sup>21</sup>

Since our work in that project, Berlin and other German and European cities have been challenged to rethink their positions and aspirations as the doors are being pried open to what some term Fortress Europe. European cities have been experiencing what seem to be unprecedented shifts due to global upheaval and concomitant movement of people. Northern cities in particular function as beacons for better futures. While the magnitude of the current refugee situation in Europe is unprecedented, the changes affecting European cities through economic factors and migration participate in a much larger global pattern that scholars such as Mike Davis have recently historicized. While in the first half of the twentieth century city centers were occupied by well-off urban dwellers, Davis shows the shift that took place as impoverished workers and peasants gradually took up their "right to the city,"<sup>22</sup> which included work, even under poor conditions mightily shaped by global market forces. Often governments did not strengthen infrastructure and opportunities in response to needs of the new arrivals.<sup>23</sup> The resultant urban slums in the developing world are part of what today's migrants reaching the Global North are fleeing; although Northern gatekeepers mostly turn these "economic migrants" away.

Meanwhile, a culture of "new urbanism" has been attracting middle- and upper-class nationals and internationals back to reconstructed city centers across the globe. Urban renewal promises cities with less crime and grime and more productivity and pleasure through enterprises and tax bases, yet such gentrification also reconfigures the city back to a situation akin that of the early twentieth-century demographics Davis describes. The deep privilege of revitalized city centers is so ubiquitous as to be invisible or expected, so commonplace as to be normative. Yet, few city governments have developed successful policies even for securing affordable housing, and it is more often than not due to the determination of principled protestors and housing activists that cities are stalled in succumbing to the demands of real-estate developers and venture capitalists. Berlin in the 1990s seemed different from these

old-growth bastions of self-legitimizing inequality. Its new arrivals experienced openness and affordability that engendered what seemed to be the creation of new solutions for many a malaise. In this new central European capital with space to grow, many believed themselves to be creating new narratives rather than different expressions of old problems. The chapters in this volume variously touch upon, illuminate, and analyze what is turning out to be in many instances a limited-time offer, a space of utopian *Zwischennutzung*—take the famous case of *Tachesles*—that is increasingly becoming or being made unsustainable in the face of global, national, and local pressures.

Under the heading “Contesting Gentrification: Subculture to Mainstream,” we bring together three contributions that examine various ways in which gentrification is negotiated and contested in contemporary Berlin. In “Cultural History of Post-Wall Berlin: From Utopian Longing to Nostalgia for Babylon,” Katrina Sark articulates shifts in the *Zeitgeist* of the city from the early 1990s to the present. The investigation treats a broad selection of cultural artifacts such as film, fiction, and visual arts read in the context of demographic alterations and urban-planning agendas to identify a nostalgic turn that, Sark argues, differs from *Ostalgie* and *Westalgie*. Rather, the nostalgia for Babylon responds to “the systematic gentrification and rebranding of the city throughout the 1990s and 2000s, the gradual disappearance of its open spaces, and the increasing impossibility of utopian dreams, desires, and longing for alternative modes of existence and creativity in a globalized and reconstructed city.” Sark’s chapter resonates with the examinations of several other contributions, particularly with Lynn Kutch’s treatment of critical antigentrification comics and the contributions that probe the reconfigurations of spaces and historical sites. Sark’s intervention that conceptualizes cultural shifts in Berlin may well map onto and illuminate other urban situations.

No individual narrative embodies the underbelly of Berlin society as saliently as the autobiographically inspired story of Christiane F. Hers is the life story unfolding in Berlin’s subcultural milieu, seemingly out of sight and untouched by processes of gentrification. In “Taking a Walk on the Wild Side: Berlin and Christiane F.’s *Second Life*,” Susan Ingram examines the second life of this most iconic Berlin subcultural figure, the drug addict best known for her 1979 autobiographical *Wir Kinder vom Bahnhof Zoo* (*We Children of Bahnhof Zoo*) and the film based on the book. Ingram’s chapter establishes the centrality of Christiane Felscherinow’s life story to Berlin’s current incarnation and the global reach of its urban aesthetic and imaginary. Seeking to understand the

appeal of drug culture within the urban cultural imaginary, Ingram reads Felscherinow's 2013 follow-up autobiography *Mein zweites Leben* (*My Second Life*) together with two other autobiographies from the drug milieu: Sven Marquart's 2014 *Die Nacht ist Leben* (*The Night Is Life*) and Michael W. Clune's *White Out: The Secret Life of Heroin* (2013). Felscherinow's autobiographies, Ingram shows, are central to creating and maintaining the image of Berlin as a "poor but sexy" nightlife capital and as a subcultural space where one may "walk on the wild side." But they also arguably confirm Christiane F.'s status as an undeterred nonconformist who continues to escape the confines of strict bourgeois norms and refuses to submit to the dictates of the capitalist marketplace. It is thus that Ingram identifies Felscherinow, the marginalized underground drug addict, as a prototypical Berliner.

Countering mainstream notions of *Bildungsbürgertum* (educated bourgeoisie), Lynn Kutch argues against the marginalization of comics as a trivial art form. In the chapter titled "Representations and Interpretations of 'The New Berlin' in Contemporary German Comics," Kutch persuasively demonstrates the pivotal role of comics artists in shaping the creative and sociocritical environment of Berlin. In fact, comics are seeing a revival in Berlin, which hosts an annual comics festival and other events to promote it. Kutch analyzes the visual and textual strategies deployed by comics artists Ulli Lust and Tim Dinter to address urban planning, marketing trends, gentrification, and other issues of concern to the everyday life of Berliners to show comics' critical engagement with the city. Berlin comics, Kutch convincingly demonstrates, enrich our understanding of the New Berlin. Comics expose its contradictions and failures, as well as its charm and appeal. By reading the comics in the context of Clare Colomb's study of Berlin's urban development and branding and marketing strategies, Kutch shows how the artists challenge its official images as the city of prosperity under the tutelage of marketing experts. Their work points to the shadow side of gentrification that displaces people through high rent and real-estate prices, destroys neighborhoods and communities, and yields few benefits for average Berliners and even for the very creative class that is supposed to be driving Berlin's economic growth.

Simon Ward's "Reconfiguring the Spaces of the 'Creative Class' in Contemporary Berlin" heads off the volume's next section titled "Spaces, Monuments, and the Appropriation of History." In it, he takes up contemporary art in Berlin as well, considering shifting urban planning politics in relation to artists and a youngish, relatively newly arrived slice of Berlin citizenry, most of whom participate in what is often called the

New Economy. Ward builds upon Sharon Zukin's work on contemporary modes of artistic production that emphasize ways of doing over ways of seeing; through their connection to specific sites of production and display, such art practices influence the urban spaces that house them. In Berlin, as in other global cities, artists and artistic practices are thus ambivalently implicated in the enrichment of daily life and in the gentrification of which *Zwischennutzung* of abandoned sites for artistic purposes is a part. Ward focuses on several projects meant to facilitate studio space for artists—*ID-Studios*, *BLO-Studios* and *Funkhaus*, showing how these projects have variously negotiated the pressures and possibilities that the market and city government brought to bear. Finally, Ward uses the example of the mixed-use project of *Allianz bedrohter Berliner Atelierhäuser* (Alliance of Threatened Berlin Studio Spaces—AbBA), which is in turn inspired by a nonprofit *ExRotaprint*, to show how diverse sets of stakeholders mobilize against their impending displacement. Ward sees these projects as models offering the potential of a sustained resistance to the homogenization and flexibilization of the creative class. By advocating for the distinct needs of studio artists, Ward argues, these groups decelerate the process by which transitional artist spaces increase commercial property values only to catch the eyes of real-estate investors.

*Zwischennutzung*—the term denoting the temporary, transitional use of buildings and lots—seems, too, an appropriate way to describe how historical meaning is assigned within the vast memoryscape that defines contemporary Berlin that is examined in the other contributions in this article grouping. Selective and provisional, memory is made relevant to the task at hand. Stakeholders compete for particular interpretations of German history, contingent perspectives that are temporarily concretized in the use of historical sites and the remembrance, narration, and memorialization of events. Not only are the physical uses of historical sites contested, but the meanings attached to and constructed around them are as well.

Stefanie Eisenhuth and Scott E. Krause maintain that the city government has thus far not developed a cohesive strategy on how to exhibit Berlin's shattered past. Examining the complexities of creating an urban memoryscape in Berlin, the chapter "Negotiating Cold War Legacies: The Discursive Ambiguity of Berlin's Memory Sites" focuses on three historical sites linked to Cold War memories—Checkpoint Charlie, the former Ministry of State Security, and Tempelhof Field. These historical sites profit from the boom in tourism, rising interest in historical localities, and the longing for historical authenticity. They are urban capital, and as part of the "history industry," they play a major role in

the constitution of historical meaning. Eisenhuth and Krause's chapter sheds light on the political, ideological, and institutional investments that shape these locations and their competitive struggle for funding and recognition. Their analysis shows how the discursive and material construction of memorial and historical sites is shaped by societal, political, and institutional negotiations taking place in the present. They conclude by pointing to the irony that after decades of having been perceived as the most un-German city, the New Berlin has risen to represent the focal point of German history and identity.

Like Eisenhuth and Kraus, Sarah Podoga and Rüdiger Traxler touch on the Berlin branding campaigns. Indeed, several contributions in our volume consider this striking and influential phenomenon. Podoga and Traxler consider the "Be Berlin" campaign and the initiatives of groups such as Berlin Partners in order to understand debates around monumentalization and memorialization in the city. Podoga and Traxler's "Branding the New Germany: The Brandenburg Gate and a New Kind of German Historical Amnesia" compares the possible meanings and deployments of the Brandenburg Gate and the planned National Freedom and Unity Memorial at the Humboldt Forum. They demonstrate how the Freedom and Unity Memorial may further simplify the vicissitudes of German history by accentuating an unequivocally positive interpretation that would also suggest a relentless march into a slick, shiny future. For them, this type of political myth-building, perhaps common in today's highly competitive attention economy, moves away from the Habermasian constitutional patriotism that has for decades informed a thoughtful engagement with the past, the present, and consideration of future action. Podoga and Traxler outline the complex cultural meaning of the Brandenburg Gate as a way of arguing for the benefits of employing this historically significant monument to represent the freedom and unity of a German people who have important responsibilities in the contemporary world.

Ayse N. Ereğ and Eszter Gantner come to similar conclusions about the simplification of the German past in their claim that a persistent focus on the present and the future helps to market the New Berlin. "Disappearing History: Challenges of Imagining Berlin after 1989" uses three case studies: the redevelopment of a former Jewish Girls' School, the "Be Berlin" campaign, and the promotion of the city as the global capital of contemporary arts. Ereğ and Gantner show how in each case history is selectively appropriated to increase Berlin's cultural capital. This practice glosses over complexities and exoticizes otherness to achieve its marketing goals. Both the medialization of the Girls' School redevel-

opment and the “Be Berlin” campaigns weight their narratives toward the present and the future, the former by emphasizing novel uses of the site and the latter by articulating what Berlin might be rather than what it has been. To further support their argument about the disappearance of history in the discursive production of Berlin today, Erek and Gantner consider Berlin’s rebirth as an art city, outlining how Berlin has been purposely developed and touted as a global urban gallery on par with New York, at times its urban heritage appropriated with new uses. Such city marketing invested in contemporary artistic production also aims toward the present and the future in lieu of the past. Erek and Gantner explore the ways in which history has been disappearing in the urban imagineering processes of Berlin over the last twenty-five years and examine what replaces it and repositions this new capital nationally and globally.

As do Ward and Johanna Schuster-Craig, Barış Ülker uses the quickly changing Neukölln as an example for the ways in which societal and urban planning narratives are brought to bear upon and reworked by various stakeholders. In the next section, “Reimagining Integration,” Ülker lays out an optimistic history of entrepreneurship and ethnic entrepreneurship with a focus on Berlin politics. “Governing through Ethnic Entrepreneurship” offers a case study of Rojda Jiwan, a Turkish-German immigrant who has built up and runs a successful healthcare business that serves its elderly population primarily born in Turkey in accordance with their specific cultural needs. Jiwan is also engaged in a variety of related activities to further the economic and social robustness of migrant communities in Berlin and has been variously recognized, for example with Berlin’s integration prize in 2008. In 2010, she was Berlin’s entrepreneur of the year. Ülker argues that, rather than simply adhering to definitions of ethnic entrepreneurship and to the precise objectives and mandates of the Berlin government’s Neighborhood Management program, this businesswoman has successfully negotiated an iteration of ethnic entrepreneurship that expresses her multifaceted values and aims.

Schuster-Craig’s exploration of Neukölln offers a differing perspective. Her work on the gentrifying area of Neukölln unpacks how the notion of “parallel societies” furthers racism in the media, public policy, and the general public. As with the creative classes that Ward in particular discusses, parallel-societies discourses can legitimate policies that privilege the individual inputs of certain actors while neglecting the efforts and aspirations of others. Schuster-Craig examines two very different projects based in Neukölln, a working-class neighborhood character-

ized by non-German (im)migrants and hipster transplants. She shows how Anna Faroqhi's comics/graphic novel *Weltreiche erblühten und fielen* (*Empires Rose and Fell*), which was commissioned by Neukölln Cultural Commission and aims to articulate "simple stories" of the quarter's residents, and "Playing-in-the-Dark," a series of community conversations about racism curated by Philippa Ebéné and the *Werkstatt der Kulturen* (atelier of cultures), variously expose racist agendas. "Resisting Integration: Neukölln Artist Responses to Integration Politics" examines the contributions of these projects to the debate sparked by Thilo Sarrazin's book *Deutschland schafft sich ab* ("Germany does away with itself"). Pointing out the difficulties of creating a sustained resonance with these community-based projects in a media landscape that is seemingly more partial to the position articulated by Sarrazin, Schuster-Craig probes how publicity functions in heterogeneous societies to further and hamper public discourse on issues of multiculturalism.

Hila Amit's "The Revival of Diasporic Hebrew in Contemporary Berlin" focuses on another conception of alternative community in her examination of the political function of the attempts to revive the Hebrew language in the New Berlin. Leaving open the question whether such a revival is indeed taking place there, she examines the work of Tal Hever-Chybowski, a Hebrew activist and PhD student of history at Humboldt University, and Berlin-based Hebrew author Mati Shemoeluf within the historical context of Zionism and Jewish emigration. Amit explores how Hever-Chybowski and Shemoeluf undermine the connection drawn by Zionist thought between the Hebrew language and the land of Israel. Opposing the Zionist "blood" and "soil" connection, they seek to promote diasporic, nonhegemonic Hebrew as a deterritorialized language and culture functioning and developing outside the confines of Israeli borders. However, according to Amit, they maintain the Zionists' utopian aspirations to create a new and different culture. Amit reads this disassociation of Hebrew from the Israeli territory as an attack on the Israeli regime. Its effectiveness remains to be seen. For now, the promotion of Hebrew language and culture in Berlin remains a marginal phenomenon driven not only by a desire to resist but also by passion, grand pronouncements, and a measure of exaggeration. Yet, these reestablishment efforts might also speak to the recent endeavors to incorporate transnational narratives into Berlin's self-portrayals, showcasing ethnic and cultural diversity in shaping historical and promotional urban narratives.

As Eisenhuth and Krause and Podoga and Traxler have shown in their analyses, debates and public events influence how meanings are

ascribed to the historical sites in which they are held, and, indeed, event culture plays an important role in promoting trans- and international narratives that speak to the self-definition of contemporary Berlin—as it does increasingly in other cities around the globe as well. In “The Eventification of Place: Urban Development and Experience Consumption in Berlin and New York City,” Doreen Jakob traces the recent trend to link urban and economic development policies to the promotion of experiences. Within this experience economy, the production and consumption of products and places is transformed into “theater.”<sup>24</sup> Berlin is the stage for a myriad of festivals aimed to attract cosmopolitan visitors. Marike Janzen’s analysis of one of these high-profile events, the *internationales literaturfestival berlin (ilb)*, tests the notion of the fluidity of boundaries that Christiane Steckenbiller thematizes in Emine Sevgi Özdamar’s fiction and asks how new non-German residents may truly weave their stories into the master narratives of Germanness.

In 2015, the annual *ilb*—one of the largest and most prestigious literary festivals in Germany—made the refugee condition its theme. It featured readings and discussions on the topic and the publication of a volume of short prose and poetry contemplating the fate of refugees and asylum seekers. Janzen problematizes *ilb*’s claim to globality in her chapter “Berlin’s International Literature Festival: Globalizing the *Bildungsbürger*” by scrutinizing *ilb*’s approach to the theme of the refugee condition and exposing it as a self-interested investment into German *Bildung*. She investigates whether *ilb*’s support of German intellectual self-formation indeed productively expands notions of Germanness, posing the question in how far the festival’s explicit and implicit indebtedness to the notion of *Bildung* and its fusion of education and citizenship leaves room for the non-citizens to represent themselves. The festival, Janzen argues, is an event where a privileged “globalness” is performed in a way that sharply circumscribes and thus contains the refugee voice. Rather than creating an international space for literature, reading, and debate, Janzen concludes, *ilb* reinforces the German national project of self-affirmation through *Bildung*. Janzen buttresses her argument with an analysis of Jenny Erpenbeck’s 2015 novel *Gehen, ging, gegangen* (*Going, Went, Gone*), which was first presented publicly at the festival and which Janzen so fittingly identifies as mirroring *ilb*’s problematic approach to the theme of refugees and asylum seekers. Erpenbeck’s novel focuses on the encounter of a Berlin *Bildungsbürger*—a retired professor of literature—with asylum seekers. The story is told from the perspective of the German professor, and while his experience and development in the course of the novel are posited as an



affirmative contrast to the barriers and prejudices imposed on asylum seekers, the novel simultaneously undermines its goal to raise awareness about the plight of refugees. It does so, as Janzen's analysis shows, by privileging the white male German voice and by filtering the voices of non-citizens through it. This narrative form prevents, Janzen argues, non-citizens from being known and heard and turns the novel—like the *ilb*—into a self-motivated and self-involved project of *Bildung*. Thus, although Erpenbeck's novel does assert the refugee's agency and right to claim space within Berlin, it ultimately affirms a specifically German project of *Bildung* as the appropriate mode for the handling of the refugee crisis, one that, in the case of the novel, is taken on by the *Bildungsbürger*. Janzen concludes by identifying potential spaces and media through which refugee voices may be heard: *ilb*'s extra-festival series of events connected to *Berlin liest*, where citizen and non-citizen Berliners read texts and engage in discussions, and the radio programs such as the "Refugee Radio Network." These and other initiatives provide hope that the voices of refugees and asylum seekers will be heard and will garner attention.

Christiane Steckenbiller explores Berlin as a fictionalized transnational cityscape through her close reading of Özdamar's final installment of the 2006 *Istanbul-Berlin-Trilogie*, *Seltsame Sterne starren zur Erde* (2003). In "Transnational Cityscapes: Tracking Turkish-German Hi/Stories in Postwar Berlin," part of our final grouping titled "Berlin Memoryscapes of the Present," Steckenbiller argues that Özdamar's novel compels its reader to understand the New Berlin as a product of over fifty years of migration history. Situated in Berlin, the novel writes across cities, nations, borders, cultures, and time, presenting urban space as a lived and embodied experience to be explored and inhabited through everyday practices. Highlighting the entwinement of spatiality and memory, Steckenbiller draws on critical geography to expose the layers and textures of Berlin's multifaceted land- and memoryscape shaped by shifting realities and memories that invest city narratives with multiple cultural, political, and symbolic meanings. As Steckenbiller shows, Özdamar's *Seltsame Sterne* is indicative of the efforts of a new generation of Germans with migrant backgrounds to inscribe transnational narratives into the German master narrative. The novel also draws attention to Berlin's legacy as a diverse, cosmopolitan space of transcultural interaction that importantly contests and rewrites accounts of Germanness. Özdamar's work consistently emphasizes the fluidity of borders and boundaries, illustrating how already in the 1970s both East and West Berlin were deeply transnational and transcultural cityscapes

and, Steckenbiller argues, prefigure the vibrant and diverse postmigrant culture—expressed also in its theater scene—that is emerging in Berlin today.

While people of Turkish heritage have long been integral to West Berlin and the New Berlin, Israeli Jewish (im)migrants are newly shaping the transnational cityscape. Hadas Cohen and Dani Kranz's and Amit's ethnographically informed contributions present complementary insights into the Israeli Jewish diaspora. Both highlight how Israeli Jewish emigration contradicts the ideological and political project of Zionism and the Israeli state, marking the emigrant as a traitor while exposing them to various levels of discouragement and reproaches from the Israeli state and society. In "Israeli Jews in the New Berlin: From Shoah Memories to Middle Eastern Encounters," Cohen and Kranz argue that while Jewish Israeli identity is constructed around memories of the Shoah and while these collective, transgenerational memories shape their initial experience of the New Berlin, it is current Israeli social and geopolitical issues, in particular the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict, that ultimately shape the self-understanding and experiences of the Israeli emigrants. Berlin, Cohen and Kranz conclude from their fieldwork, provides an escape from the constraints and conflicts that dominate life in Israel. They find that Israeli emigrants stress their dissatisfaction with the intrusion of religion into the private sphere and with the political stalemate surrounding the Middle East conflict. For them, Berlin is a place of the present and the future rather than the past.

As Cohen and Kranz's contribution and most others here suggest, temporally palimpsestic layerings imbue Berlin topographies with complex and contested meanings; they may similarly garner the elusive mystique of authenticity. In his investigation of the angelic in Wim Wenders's classic *Der Himmel über Berlin* (aka *Wings of Desire*) (1987) and the vampiric in Dennis Gansel's more recent *We Are the Night* (2010), Peter Gözl picks up on the notion of authentic places as glossed by Jennifer Jordan. Jordan points out that such sites are not ontologically authentic; rather, they gain authenticity through their claim to having hosted important events.<sup>25</sup> Several of our studies obliquely address memorials and memorialization through such a notion of authenticity; here, Gözl investigates how two fiction films deploy geographical authenticity for distinct ends. Gözl writes that "the reflective, thoughtful, passive angels of the past and the hedonistic, action-driven consumer vampires of the present complement each other.... They depict the city's history both as a dialogue with a past that is always present and as an unmediated

existence among (and out of) the ruins of the previous century.” Yet, it would seem that Gansel’s film gestures toward erasure and cooptation. Götz describes how the vampire film presents Berlin’s history in a punctuated form that nearly elides the period of the Wall that gives a *raison d’être* to Wenders’s story of angels. *Der Himmel über Berlin* invites viewers to engage with *Vergangenheitsbewältigung* (working through the fascist past) through its extensive, lyrical deployment of overdetermined sites of militarism and war such as the *Gedächtniskirche* (Kaiser Wilhelm Memorial Church) and the *Siegessäule* (Victory Column). Gansel’s *We Are the Night*, in contrast, depicts and seemingly valorizes a self-focused and instrumentalizing vampirization of weighty Berlin histories, celebrating the night-lifestyle that emerged in and upon urban sites that are now beginning to signify profitable accumulation of capital. This more contemporary film resonates with what Ingram reads in the autobiographies of Felscherinow, Marquart, and Clune as allegorical alternatives to and individualistic rebellion against the productivity that the new metropolis demands.

Complementing the notion of the vampirization of Berlin, Andre Schütze examines the cinematic tradition of the “uncanny Berlin” as inscribed in four recent action films/thrillers: Paul Greengrass’s *The Bourne Supremacy* (2004), the European coproduction Jaume Collet-Serra’s *Unknown* (2011), Farhan Akhtar’s Indian blockbuster *Don II* (2011), and Ryoo Seung-wan’s South Korean *The Berlin File* (2013). In these films, the German metropolis no longer holds a peripheral status but is portrayed as an international city with global communication and transportation connectivity. Although the physical Wall has disappeared and faded into memory, for Schütze it reasserts itself and its concomitant history through its very absence. Material absence turns into uncanny presents, and the New Berlin remains haunted by its history of violence and division. It is the stage for the protagonists’ crisis of identity, loss and recovery of memory, flight from and fight with shadowy enemies, and dealings with uncertainty and danger. Past and present are inextricably intertwined. As Schütze shows, the protagonists’ emplacements in and engagements with the city are not driven by rational knowledge or an understanding of Berlin’s history or current status but rather by strong senses of emotional discontent. Against the backdrop of Berlin’s continuing reputation as the world’s historic capital of terror, crime, and struggle for political domination, the films, Schütze proposes, utilize the New Berlin not primarily to stage the struggle of the individual in a vast metropolis but to show new post-Cold War struggles in which the in-

dividual is pitted against anonymous organizations that are no longer connected to the city or to unambiguously identifiable economic and ideological interests and political powers.

While Berlin's iterations are in some ways unique, they resonate with global patterns of action and thought that are radically and even violently shaping our world. With this volume we aim to shed light on both the New Berlin's specificity and its global resonance today. We share our contributors' appreciation of the historic and cultural complexity of this city, as well as their unease about certain recent developments foreboding a future of urban growth dominated by market logics. In bringing together a multitude of perspectives and voices, we seek to reflect and cultivate the multitude that is Berlin. It is our hope that the critical import of our contributors' multifaceted and nuanced analyses will reshape our understanding of the intricacies of Berlin's current status as a global city and initiate debates, while evoking solutions to questions about how to create inclusive, equitable, and just urban communities.

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## Notes

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5. David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope* (Edinburgh, 2000).
6. Andreas Huyssen, "The Voids of Berlin," *Critical Inquiry* 24, no. 1 (1997): 62.
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10. Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford, 1991), 39.
11. *Ibid.*, 38–39.
12. Alan Latham, Derek McCormack, Kim McNarama, and Donald McNeil, *Key Concepts in Urban Geography* (New York, 2009), 111.
13. *Ibid.*, 12.
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15. *Ibid.*, 81.
16. J. Hillis Miller, *Topographies* (Palo Alto, 1995), 3.
17. *Ibid.*, 6.
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