Capital under Construction

History and the Production of Locality in Contemporary Berlin

Beate Binder

Since the fall of the Wall in 1989, German unification in 1990, and the 1991 decision to move the seat of government from Bonn to Berlin, the city has undertaken a transformation occurring on both a material and a symbolic level. This article explores the specific role of historical argumentation within this process. Considering the specific context of Berlin during the 1990s, the author pleads for a double perspective on the politics of history. On the one hand, it plays an important role in the context of an emerging symbolic economy, which is connected closely to an ever more globalized world. On the other hand, it is a strategy used for the construction and representation of group identities. Referring to specific sites in Berlin, this article attempts to describe the complex and contradictory forces which come to the fore while exploring the very logic that historical argumentation and the reconstruction of old buildings have. The debate on the Schloßplatz in Berlin sheds light on how historical ideas and the construction of commemoration sites enable different social groups to construe a political self, a social and a local identity, and allow the establishment of a sense of being a Berliner and an emotional connection with one's place of residence. At the same time the debate provides a "symbolic space" in which issues of national identity and concepts of Germanness can be discussed. But the question must be raised as to who takes part in these discussions.

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Some months ago, the American actor Kevin Costner revealed to the German magazine *Gala* his plans to shoot his next movie in Berlin. In so far as film shooting in Berlin has increased steadily during the last decade, this announcement is not really astonishing. Berlin seems to offer a special atmosphere which is regarded as a frame for movie stories in the desired way. Of course there are different reasons for the decision to choose Berlin as location for a film shooting. Therefore, it is most interesting to hear Costner explaining his choice: "There is no place where you can experience history closer than in Berlin. Here you can breathe the past everywhere," he explained enthusiastically to the reporters. And of course Costner has already chosen the famous reconstructed Hotel Adlon close to the Brandenburg Gate for his stay in the city.[1]

To speak about Berlin as a place where everyone is able to come into contact with almost all events which changed the world so fundamentally during the 20th century is not at all unusual – especially when Americans speak about the city. Berlin seems to represent the most important occurrences of this period in a very dense and perceptible way, especially the beginning and the end of World War II, the killing of millions of people during German fascism, the Cold War and the division of Germany, Europe and, in the end, the whole world, the fall of the Wall, and German and European unification – to mention just the most important turning points of the 20th century. Thus, the narrative of Berlin as a place "where history really took place" is very strong in the present imagery of the city.

At the same time, Karl Scheffler's statement

that Berlin is a place condemned "forever to become and never to be" (Scheffler 1989: 219) has gained new importance and meaning. During the last decade the sentence has often been cited as the city claims to become "new": the new capital of Germany on the one hand and a "new" and vivid metropolis and European economic center on the other hand. It is one of the "narrative abbreviations" (Rüsen 1994) which emphasizes the efforts of Berlin to transform itself. Thus, Scheffel's statement speaks about the power and potential which enable the city to cope with its special situation since 1990 and with the challenges of the 21st century in general.

And indeed, Berlin has undergone and is still undergoing an immense transformation which takes place on both a material and a symbolic level. The city has turned into a collection of cranes, construction fences, and ditches as a consequence of the fall of the Wall in 1989, German unification in 1990, and the 1991 decision to move the seat of government to Berlin. Undeveloped properties and free real estate were made available for the development of concepts which envisioned a reorganization of the entire inner city area, an area in which government institutions, political organizations, and political parties found their new home, and where new business centers and consumer areas have been erected. At the same time, these decisions about architecture and city planning are closely linked to a symbolic transformation by means of which new interpretations, images, and narratives will be inserted into the city and its urban space. Before and while the "New Berlin" arises in stone, glass, concrete, and steel, it emerges as an idea and an image which serve to organize the transformation of the city into a capital and invest the planning procedures with meaning and legitimacy.

The two narratives – the one of the city as a place where history really took place and the one which tells about the future role of Berlin as metropolis and capital – are closely linked to each other in the discourse which accompanies and structures the ongoing changes. But the narratives of the past and those of the future, the historical imagery and the visionary both play an important role not only in contemporary Berlin but also in transformation processes which are reshaping late modern cities and the notion of urbanity in more general terms (Niedermüller 1998). One important strategy for coping with the challenges of forced transformation is – at least in European cities – the use of history in order to construct a city's uniqueness.

In the following, I attempt more exactly to describe the inner logic of these processes while more closely exploring the politics of history brought into action within the symbolic transformation of Berlin. The production of an historical legibility as part of the production of locality plays a contradictory and complex role within contemporary processes of urban transformation. This role does not completely mesh with the concepts of economic transformation described by the term "symbolic economy." Even though a lot of these efforts to built up a "New Berlin" achieve their logic itself by referring to concepts of urban transformations concerning economic and social changes in general, a closer look at the transformation processes of Berlin reveals that the politics of history are linked to a politics of representation which hinder and support the emergence of the "New Berlin." For Berlin's special situation since 1989, which will be considered more exactly later, makes history an extremely contested field of social struggle.

In the remainder of this text I would like to refer to the symbolic content of the built environment and talk about specific locations in Berlin. While exploring the politics of history, I would like to show at least some aspects of the specific logic the contemporary symbolic transformation of the city has with regard to the production of locality, which is the production of a "New Berlin".

Symbolic Economy, the Selling of Places and History

To describe the transformation of a city as a restructuring of its symbolic landscape means to refer to an approach in urban anthropology which focuses on the representation practices of different social groups and on aesthetic or visual means of in- and exclusion. This approach not only looks at cities as spaces of different social groups and physical stages of social transforma-

tion but also as culturally encoded and symbolically structured landscapes.

In her books, Sharon Zukin has very convincingly shown how the material landscape itself became the most important visual representation of cities (Zukin 1995: 16). Buildings, places, streets, parks, monuments, statues, and other urban icons, in short the whole *"architexture"* (Azaryahu 1992) turns the city into a space of historical memories, cultural imaginations, and political visions. In an urban landscape, historical imaginations and political visions, cultural myths, memories and longings are inscribed. To put it in other words, the body of a city is a culturally coded and symbolically structured text, a city's landscape with its architecture and spatial order, its commemoration and representation sites of different social processes speaks about the historical past and the current problems of a society, about exclusion and entitlement. The construction of this text is an ongoing process which is powerfully structured by social and political negotiations on the question as to "what – and who – should be visible and what should not, on concepts of order and disorder, and on uses of aesthetic power" (Zukin 1995: 7).

Of course, cities have always had a symbolic economy in so far as they represent the political power of those who were able to materialize their aesthetic preferences and decisions on a good city life. Cities, and especially European cities, have always been cultural constructions, places and locations of cultural myths, memories and nostalgia. The urban symbolic bodies have always been inscribed with different political and ideological meanings and historical interpretations.

Provoked by economic and technological transformations, as for example the general shift to an economy based on service industries, the transnationalization of production and financial markets, the spreading of information technologies, cities are forced to compete on an international level (Sassen 1991), which has caused new strategies of spatial representation, the "festivalization" of city politics (Häussermann/Siebel 1993), and the transformation of city centers into consumer and event zones. At the same time, cities are confronted with social polarization, i.e. processes of gentrification on the one hand, and the emergence of a new "urban under-class" on the other hand. As for instance Sharon Zukin (1995, 2000) points out, the direct consequence of these changes is the emergence of a symbolic economy. The symbolic economy is based mainly on the strategy of producing distinctive images in order to make cities an attractive place for financial investors, young urban professionals, city boosters and other elite groups, as well as for tourists. Looking at cities in this way does not mean to deny the economic power of money, investment politics, and ownership but to emphasize that the emerging new symbolic economy is based on the use and appropriation of culture for the development and material reproduction of cities. Today European big cities, metropolises, and capitals are forced to act on a global scene, they are forced to produce and to sell images not only on a national but even on a global level, they need a symbolic economy in order to claim and to secure political and economic power. They want to present and represent themselves as *world cities*, as "fairly durable sources of new culture", as Ulf Hannerz (1993: 68) put it. Image production, culture politics, and an aesthetic urge are central strategies of city politics and thus for transformation processes in cities. They influence a city's possibilities to reproduce space and to constitute an urban society. In the context of an expanding service industry, culture and the production of symbols are no longer merely the outcome of economic processes but also part of them (Zukin 1995). As Setha M. Low argues, the building "becomes a point of spatial articulation for the intersection of multiple forces of economy, society and culture" (Low 1996: 861).

"The symbolic economy thus features two parallel production systems that are crucial to a city's economic growth: the production of space, with its synergy of capital investment and cultural meanings, and the production of symbols, which construct both a currency of commercial exchange and a language of social identity" (Zukin 2000: 82).

Within this politics, history plays an important role because it allows one convincingly to construe unmistakable and distinctive images. The

imageability of cities "becomes the new selling point" (Boyer 1992: 193). In this sense, history is a strong and powerful resource for the production of images. Historical reconstruction and preservation of old buildings and historical quarters are used in the sense of spatial design codes and an architectural pattern language. The emphasis on one's own urban heritage and traditions, the erection of monuments and statues, the founding of commemoration sites and museums are strategies by which historical narratives are inserted into the body of the city in order to produce a distinctive image. Thus, the marketing of history, stored in old buildings and in city symbols (*Wahrzeichen*), is an important aspect of the "selling places" (Philo/Kearns 1993: 4f). Especially in Europe, where the discourse on the restructuring of cities is centered around the term "European City" with its specific notions of "urbanity", historical "depth" and continuity, a city's historical ensembles seem to guarantee the uniqueness of an urban landscape. Urban images are built up around the constructed environment, but are associated as well with narratives and histories which carry a special atmosphere, agendas of values and meanings which often work as "longue durée" (Lindner 1999). Of course, to use the past for the marketing of places does not mean to invent historical narratives but to select them and put those parts together which coincide with the desired city image. As Chris Philo and Gerry Kearns put it,

"there is a direct sense of selling the 'postmodern city' which entails the deliberate creation of cultural-historical packages – the more or less lumping together of cultural and historical elements to produce marketable pastiches (...) and there is the more direct sense which entails the subtle 'playing' with cultural and historical materials in the production of what are supposed to be attractive, pleasing and uplifting environments" (Philo/Kearns 1993: 22).

In Berlin a whole range of locations shows the functioning of this marketing strategy, which is "pursued by those individuals and organizations who 'manage' places" (Philo/Kearns 1993: 2). "Rent your own part of history" announces for example the real estate fund "defo." The object, the so called "Alfandary house," an old branch office of Persian carpet sellers, is situated close to the famous border crossing point

1. Advertisement of the real estate fund "defo": "Rent your own part of history" – May 2001. Photo: Beate Binder.

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2. A construction fence blocking the Friedrichstraße at the former Checkpoint Charlie – 1994. Photo: Beate Binder.

"Checkpoint Charlie" at the former no man's land of the Wall. Now the old building will be reconstructed corresponding to contemporary standards, and as the new owners announce on their homepage: "We will prove with this location that history has a future."[2] As the poster suggests the renting by future users of their own piece will open up a window to and in Berlin (cf. fig. 1).

The new office buildings designed by Philip Johnson at "Checkpoint Charlie" are another example for the use of historical quotations in order to offer a distinctive address for a building. One of the legendary panels announcing the sector boundary to Berliners and their visitors ("You are leaving the American sector") hangs in one of the entrance halls. During the construction of the buildings, a panel blocked the Friedrichstraße announcing: "Stop – construction site. 1961: the Wall was erected on this site, 1994–1998: five years after the fall of the Wall one of the most attractive business addresses with offices, shops and restaurants, flats and culture is coming into being here." The illustration shows a scene of the battles around the 17th of June 1953 when Soviet soldiers lined up at the sector boundary. Today, the Philip Johnson-building belongs to the exhibitions around "Checkpoint Charlie" (cf. fig. 2). The complex is not completely finished yet because of the financial ruin of a principal investor. But there are plans to exhibit

parts of the former border installations, i.e. a watch-tower, fences and barbed wire together with a model of the construction of the border area in the missing building.

The same happened on a much bigger scale at Potsdamer Platz, which was the most important construction site of the "New Berlin" in the 1990s. Potsdamer Platz was the most famous central square of the "old" Berlin before World War II which fundamentally shaped Berlin's image of urbanity and modernity. Still today, it symbolizes the dynamic growth and feverish activity, the speed and motion of the "modern" Berlin. After the war, the square had become a kind of no man's land between East and West in divided Berlin. Little remained of the square other than some souvenir shops and wooden observation platforms which allowed the thousands of visitors coming here to have a glimpse over the Wall at East Berlin and the border strip between the two parts of the Wall. During five decades this "significant void" (Ladd 1997: 115) was vivid only in memory and history. Just two buildings reminded the visitors of the square's former importance as a center of amusement and entertainment. After the Wall came down, the area became one of the most important planning projects of the "New Berlin." In 1991 the area was sold to Daimler Benz, Sony, the Hertie department store chain, and Asea Brown Boveri (ABB). Besides the fact that the Berlin

Senate sold the land for a bargain price, the prestigious and central address the site offers combined with the possibility to develop unencumbered land made this place most attractive for investors. In 1991 an urban design competition was announced. Its participants were asked, on the one hand, to find a new urban structure with a rich mixture of urban functions, their task was to turn the Potsdamer Platz into a "core site" of the "New Berlin." On the other hand, they had the task of re-inventing the old Berlin at this location by referring to the old street grid and to regain the atmosphere and identity of the pre-war Berlin with their proposals (Burg 1994).

Even though the most important parts – the buildings of Debis and Sony – have officially been opened to the public, the construction is not finished on the whole. Nevertheless, the two developers Daimler and Sony were able to renew the image the square had in the 1920s and to establish a bridge between the time of the "golden twenties" and the envisioned future the square is supposed to have. Daimler in particular accompanied the progress of the buildings from the beginning of the construction work in 1994 till the opening ceremonies in 1998 with a whole range of public events. The building site became a showcase, a "Schaustelle"[3], where the visitors and future users were allowed to take part in the process of realizing the plans. During all these occasions, memories of the former vivid urbanity were performed and compared to the future shape of the Potsdamer Platz. The newly built "cathedrals" of the service industries were staged as a kind of resurrection of the former urban center.

But the picture of the 1920s represents only a small piece of the history the place has had. Thus, the strategy was to ask all other parts of history to fall into more or less oblivion, for example the time of the divided city, the time of the black market in the 1940s, the time of fascism when the people's court under Freisler was located in the nearby Bellevuestraße, or the time of the 19th century when this area was a "green" suburb of the expanding Berlin, with a lot of gardens. All these parts of the square's history seem to have been overcome by the establishment of the new urban entertainment, shopping, and business center (cf. Frank 2000).

The opening ceremony of the Daimler area impressively staged this point of view. The new buildings were covered with huge panels showing famous pictures of the square's history of the 20th century. During the ceremony workers let these so called "hanging pictures" fall and gave way for the future of the place as a new amusement and entertainment center. Today, both the Sony and the Daimler complex present themselves as a rebirth and rejuvenation of the old Potsdamer Platz of the 1920s. Streets and restaurants are named after famous actors or former cafés were "re-opened", as for example the Café Josty: once a well known address, today only a citation of this former address (cf. fig. 3). A reconstruction (manufactured by Siemens apprentices) of the famous first traffic light of the world has been placed at the Potsdamer Platz. Combined with icons of multiculturalism and globality, stores, restaurants and amusement centers refer to traditions of the Berlin of the 1920s and to modern urbanity. The only two buildings which were left over after World War II and the demolition of the remaining ruins in the 1950s, the Weinhaus Huth and the Hotel Esplanade with the famous "Kaisersaal," are integrated in the new buildings, the later hidden behind glass like an object in a museum exhibition.

As Christine Boyer has shown in her study of "Merchandising history at South Street Seaport" in New York (Boyer 1992), those arrangements of historical particles and pieces are built up as tableaus visitors can enjoy while walking through. "Surrounding the spectators with an artfully composed historic ambience" (Boyer 1992: 184) the reconstructed ensembles seem to indicate strong ties to the historic past. But they do not at all make possible a critical examination of history, for these environments are built up for aesthetic consumption, not for analysis, as Boyer argues. They are for "inattentive viewers, for the tourist and city traveler who browses through these real-life stage-sets scarcely aware of how the relics of the past have been indexed, framed and scaled", a visitor who comes in order to consume places and to enrich the taste of food by that of history (Boyer 1992: 189). The arrangement the reconstruction at South

3. "Re-opening" of the famous Café Josty at the Potsdamer Platz – April 2001. Photo: Beate Binder.

Street Seaport enacts is based on the language of its architecture. The reconstruction and the retro urban design mark difference and estrangement from the past and enable the visitors to perceive the past as finished and closed up (Boyer 1992: 199; MacCannell 1976). And, more crucially, Boyer's argument is that the reconstruction marks a difference between an authentic experience of history and memory and an inauthentic one. Historical preservation that acts as decor for consumption erases the "actual uniqueness of place and context" and becomes "set-ups that intensify the commodity's power of seduction" (Boyer 1992: 200).

But these examples represent only one possibility to interpret the current use of history for city planning. These narratives offer a perspective which focuses only on economics in a very strict sense. To follow Jane Jacob's argument, aestheticization via historical preservation and history-driven image production

"are often depicted as only ever working negatively: to override more real urban cultures (the appropriation of difference); as generating a proliferation of inauthentic diversity (depthless fragmentation); or as contributing to the

production of new intensities of difference (social polarization)" (Jacobs 1998: 252f).

It cannot be denied that urban politics and urban processes are closely linked to economic interests. But the symbolic landscape of contemporary cities bears more than the conflicts based on marketing strategies and the selling of places – even though the question of political economy and of circuits of capital is a crucial one for city development. But, as Jane M. Jacobs put it,

"cities are also sites where difference is amplified and where a situated politics of difference is acted out in a multitude of ways. There are many vectors of power at work in cities that structure how identity is articulated and rights and privileges are distributed. These vectors are not outside or incidental to the working of capitalism, but they are often as not shaped by relations of difference whose complexity cannot simply be reduced to a narrow script of capital accumulation" (Jacobs 1998: 253).

As Jacobs gives flesh to this argument by relating to (post)colonial urban politics in contemporary Australian cities, I want to stay in Berlin

and concentrate more closely on an example where history has become the center of conflict: the Schloßplatz in the inner district Mitte.[4] A closer look at this central square – which is usually called the "heart" of historic Berlin – will show the contradictory forces city planning and the politics of history follow. As Zoltán Fejős pointed out, even the most marketed urban symbol can function as a common symbolic "space" for negotiation about shared values and ideals, about competing social identities and meanings (Fejős 2000). At the moment, the Schloßplatz is not at all a marketed symbol – for instance it is not possible to buy a postcard with this motif. But the square is supposed to become one. For the very aim of an important part of the agents involved in the struggle is to transform the square into a strong symbol of Berlin and/or the German nation state. A closer look at the Schloßplatz debate reveals processes centered around conflicting memories and contested spaces in the urban society of Berlin as well as German society on a national scale. It offers a possibility to analyze the power lines and cultural logic the construction of a "collective" memory follows up. There are, as Jane Jacobs has pointed out, different power "vectors" at work, and it is not only the economic and political elite who are involved in defining the symbolic content of an urban landscape – even though they are a very powerful force in this process. And it seems to be more than the "social logic" of "socialisation designed to convince local people (…) that they are important cogs in a successful community and that all sorts of 'good things' are done on their behalf" (Philo/Kearns 1993: 3).

"Capital dilemmas"[5] – Contexts of the Schloßplatz Debate

There are some arguments which allow one to follow a more complex perspective on the politics of history in the process of urban transformation while writing about contemporary Berlin. The negotiation about the symbolic content of urban spaces and the desired or desirable image of the city have been reinforced in Berlin by the fall of the Wall in 1989, German unification in 1990, and the 1991 decision to move the seat of government from Bonn to Berlin. To think about the changing symbolic landscape in Berlin and its historical "content" is to take at least three aspects into account. All three bear moments of a special outline politics of history have today.

I have already mentioned above one point of

4. Map of the inner city district with the Potsdamer Platz (1), Checkpoint Charlie (2) and the Schloßplatz (3).

the changing context: the newly defined economic situation of the city. While West Berlin used to function largely on the basis of an extensive politics of subsidies and East Berlin as capital of the GDR had access to larger resources than any other East German city, Berlin has to enter the general economic and cultural competition of cities in order to gain ground on a transnational scale nowadays. A wide range of efforts of the last decade has aimed at the modernization of the entire city. The accompanying symbolic transformation of the city and its urban landscape is closely linked to the production of a marketable image. Thus, Berlin is on the way to producing a new symbolic order which represents its economic and political force and attracts research institutions, service industries, elite groups, and, last but not least, tourists to leave their money in town. The desired image is built up on the one hand on pictures of a global, transnational, and multicultural city which holds pervasive economic and political power today and, as argued above, on urban heritage and traditions, on the urban historical icons and narratives, which organize the peculiarity of the city.

But Berlin is not only a big city but also the capital of Germany. Even though economic and cultural globalization has begun to undermine and gradually to diminish the national role of capitals, these cities still play a special role in the perception of nation states. Since the 19th century European capitals have been distinguished sites of politics, of social and historical memory, and of national culture. They have presented themselves as national cities, and they were treated as special products of different national histories. "Like stories written in stone capitals across the globe embody national identity and historical consciousness", Michael Z. Wise has put this concept of perceiving national capitals in his study of Berlin's *Capital Dilemma* of today (Wise 1998: 11). And Werner Süß and Ralf Rytlewski write: "Eine Hauptstadt ist nach allgemeinem Verständnis eine Stadt, in der sich die Geschichte eines Landes verdichtet, die in besonderem Maß für das Schicksal einer Nation einsteht" (Süß/Rytlewski 1999:10). But nowadays there exists a certain tension between the aim to gain economic power as metropolis and that of becoming a national capital. Therefore, the concept of the "New Berlin" attempts to realize a new mixture of globalized future and localized past, of becoming a transnational metropolis and a national capital at the same time, in other words, it attempts to realize locality under the special condition of globality in a specific way.

At the same time, the unification of the two Germanies in 1990 and the 1991 decision to move the seat of government to Berlin fundamentally changed the perception of the city in terms of history. While the fall of the Wall in 1989 and the end of Cold War politics were perceived as a chance to overcome history in the first place and to offer Berlin a future of nearly unlimited possibilities – especially in terms of urban and economic growth –, these visions not only turned out to be utopian visions which will not easily come true, but also once more demonstrated to some commentators Germany's megalomaniac endeavors. In that Berlin represents the German national history, the decision to move the seat of government to Berlin was perceived in the main as a removal into history, what means a removal into the "darkest parts" of German history: the Prussian and Wilhelmenian authoritarian state with its militaristic traditions, but a lack of institutionalized democracy, and of course fascism, Hitler's concepts of German expansion and conquest, and the planning and carrying out of the Holocaust. In so far as capitals have always been distinguished sites of political, social, and historical memory and national culture, the government move roused some suspicions – for it seemed to be a return to and national self-identification with these unwelcome German traditions.

Therefore, for the former "front-line-city", socialist capital, and "capital in waiting" (*Hauptstadt im Wartestand*) to become a true capital city in its own right, it must structure its image in a new way. Thus, this discursive context seems to be the main reason why the politics of history has played an important role during the last decade and in some aspects continues to do so. From the point of view of the government, the "new, old" capital is supposed to comment on German history and thus on the historical narratives inserted in the urban landscape. The

5. The Schloßplatz today, 2000. To the left the Berlin Dome, to the right the Palast der Republik. Photo: Beate Binder.

city is supposed to guarantee the integrity and the "trustworthiness" of the unified German nation state. The government wants to show via its capital that it will fulfill the obligations the past imposes. But because history offers different possibilities for interpretation and accentuation, a whole set of debates has till today been concerned with the construction of commemoration sites and the "how" of spatializing historical narratives in the urban landscape. To a great extent, these debates concern questions of national self image and identity.

The situation becomes even more complicated because there are two national histories and social orders present in Berlin today which existed side by side for more than forty years. For the most time the Wall clearly separated these spatial symbolic orders, but now these differences in terms of historical past and political traditions are visible and obvious as they clash together every day. The urban landscape of Berlin still simultaneously represents two political systems with their prevailing visual

orders. The re-unification of the two Berlins set in motion a physical and symbolic process of transformation which aims at erasing these differences and at creating a new symbolic order for the unified Germany. This process is for the most part structured by the dominance of the West. And it is as well closely linked to a politics of history as it is accompanied by the renaming of streets, the demolition of commemoration sites and memorials of the GDR, and the invention of a new spatial order for the Eastern part of the city.

To put it briefly: In Berlin the past is indeed and in a very special sense a "cultural presence in the present," as Chris Philo and Gerry Kearns put it (Philo/Kearns 1993: 4). All three aspects or discursive contexts make history a particular contested field of political and social struggle in contemporary Berlin. These struggles are based on the question who and what should be visible in the urban landscape, who will gain the power to structure the visual order the city shall have in future (Zukin 1995). The inner

6. The Schloßplatz today, 1999. Excavations of the Castle in front of the Palast der Republik. Photo: Beate Binder.

logic of these struggles is based on strategies different social groups have to represent themselves in the urban landscape and to gain access to public space. The very aim is to give space an essentialistic identity, which is supposed to be perceived as natural and unchangeable. Thus, different social groups try to make their interpretation of a certain space the dominant one, the one which is defining for the most parts of society and which will be inserted most obviously in city spaces. Of course, social positions and the power a speaker has at his disposal make arguments convincing and, thus, entitle them (Bourdieu 1990), more than (historical) "correctness" may ever do. But this power fundamentally depends not only on the position in society but also on the logic a discursive structure offers. That is why the specific context of German unification and of the government move empowers (at least for a short while) some groups while others with high institutionalized power are not able to carry through their arguments.

The Schloßplatz – Contested Space in the Old City Center

Let me now turn to the Schloßplatz and show some aspects of the cultural logic history politics may have these days. For ten years the Schloßplatz, which is located in the inner district Mitte at the very end of the famous boulevard Unter den Linden, has been in the middle of passionate public debates. Different interest groups and interested citizens, official leaders and politicians of the Berlin Senate and the German Bundestag as well as a nationwide and – at least in some aspects – international public has been engaged in the struggle over the future use and design of this square. Till today it has not been possible to find a solution based on consensus. The square turned out to be a symbolic "common space" (Fejős 2000) which offers the possibility to negotiate and argue about Berlin's identity and the national role of the capital, about concepts of national self-representations and different constructions of citi-

zenship. And the debate makes visible different ways to feel "at home" in Berlin and to stage oneself as Berliner. Or, the other way round, the discourse on the Schloßplatz offers a possibility to learn about the production of locality as well as to inquire about the political role history and tradition play in contemporary urban society.

But to learn about these aspects requires taking into account not only the symbolic structure of architecture and city design but also knowing about the experiences people have with and meanings they give to urban spaces. The commitment to and engagement for a certain place as a symbol of one's home not only shows a certain interest in local history, it is not only a means to evaluate the changes the neighborhood has undergone (so Philo/Kearns 1993), but also enables the occupation of a political and social position. But of course, it is necessary to ask who is able to make use of the urban landscape or a specific place in this way.

Let me first give a short impression of the current appearance the square has. It got its name because of the royal palace, the inner city residence of the Hohenzollern family, which ruled in Prussia and Germany respectively till 1918. Erected in 1442, the royal palace was rebuilt and enlarged during the following centuries. Between the two World Wars the feudalistic building served as museum and exhibition hall till it was heavily damaged during World War II. Even though parts were in use for exhibitions after the war, the GDR government decided in 1950 to get rid of this old symbol of feudalism. The remains of the royal palace had to give way to the political center of the newly built state. Therefore, the square's current appearance is characterized by representational buildings of the former GDR which formed the very political center of the German socialist state.

The redesign of the Schloßplatz began by renaming it Marx-Engels-Forum in 1951 and by building the Staatsratsgebäude, the seat of the State Council of the GDR, at the southern edge of the then empty square in the 1960s. The front of the Staatsratsgebäude is structured by the portal of the former royal palace with the balcony from which Karl Liebknecht announced the Socialist Republic in 1918 – shortly after Scheidemann did the same at the Reichstag

building (Michel 1993). While in the beginning of the 1990s decisions were made to erase the Staatsratsgebäude, it is listed as a historical monument today. During the last two years it has served as temporary Chancellery, but its future use has not yet been decided.

In the 1960s as well, the former Außenministerium (Foreign Ministry) was built at the south-western edge of the square replacing the remains of the old Kommandantur, an 18th century's building. The Außenministerium was dismantled in 1995 (Leinauer 1996) and replaced by a little park. Today Bertelsmann is constructing a "media center" on this site – a combination of the reconstructed Kommandantur with new architectural elements (*Tagesspiegel* 29.9.1999 and 26.5.2001). The northern edge is bordered by the famous boulevard Unter den Linden, on the other side of which is the Lustgarten with National Gallery and Cathedral, both dating from the 19th century.

The most important building and one main point of the ongoing debate is the Palast der Republik which forms the north-eastern border of the square. It was built as a cultural center in the tradition of the Russian Volkshäuser (people's houses) of the workers movement (Hain 1996). It accommodated the plenary hall of the Volkskammer (the People's Assembly of the GDR), conference rooms, but almost more importantly it hosted a range of cultural and entertainment institutions, as for example restaurants, cafés, theaters, a bowling alley, and a youth club. The building was erected in the 1970s and opened its doors in 1976. In the fall of 1990, it was closed due to asbestos contamination, and the building has stood empty ever since while the removal of the asbestos continues. But firstly, the national symbol of the GDR, which used to be integrated in the façade, has been removed. Today the Palast der Republik is surrounded by a construction fence and provides a quite miserable sight in the course of asbestos removal.

The square itself hosts a small circus tent, where cabaret and various variety shows take place, and an archaeological excavation site which reveals some cellar walls of the former royal palace, an exhibition on panels about the history of the square and its buildings, and last

7. "Weiss 104" – art event on the Schloßplatz – September 2000. Photo: Beate Binder.

but not least some greenery. The remaining space serves as a parking lot.

Even though some people cross the square on their way through the city, only a small number use it for daily routines. Only some visitors come here in order to look at the exhibition panels or the excavations, some of them having a rest amidst the newly arranged greenery. But on the whole, the Schloßplatz is not a place to spend one's leisure time. During recent years some art events have taken place at the Schloß-platz as the square and the related debate provokes artists to comment on it and the un-solved situation concerning the future use and shape of this urban space (cf. ill. no. 7).[6]

Thus, till today no agreement of the future use and design of the Schloßplatz has been found. In January, 2001, an "International Ex-pert Group Historische Mitte Berlin" was found-ed by the Berlin Senate and the German Bun-destag which is expected to make proposals and find solutions for the question what to do with this space in terms of use and design and how to finance these plans.

But what has turned this area into "contest-ed space" and had made nearly all planning and (re-)construction impossible for more than 10 years? All efforts to make the square more "attractive" are meanwhile based on the argu-ment that the Schloßplatz is the very "heart" of the *historical* Berlin. The designation of the areas of oldest settlement as "the heart of Ber-lin" becomes possible only through a symbolic elevation of their status. Berlin's birthplace has been reinvented and the Spreeinsel (River Spree Island) has been assigned a significant role in the construction of Berlin's urban identity. In a sense, Berlin has been rearranged around the Spreeinsel. The old and distant history of Berlin that is projected onto this space contains no dangerous material for conflicts. However, the restructuring of the city space demands a reori-ented view of the city. This is especially true from the West Berlin perspective, as for decades this district was only accessible by crossing the border, and was therefore not linked to every-day experiences or recent symbolic values (cf. *Stadtforum* 1991:3: 8). The symbolic elevation of the historically older layers mainly serves to devalue the contemporary situation of the square. While in former times the "heart" of Berlin beat on the Schloßplatz and, as this bodily metaphor suggests, gave impulses for the development of the whole city, the square's

present status is described as "empty" and "desolate". The blame for this state of affairs is put squarely on the government of the GDR and its ideas of "socialist city planning". The argument is that these ideas were responsible for the "inflationary vastness" which erased all scales and proportions and thus for the "almost complete loss of historical identity" of the Schloßplatz (*Stadtforum* 1992:7: 1).

This rhetoric of the authorities of the Berlin Senate and parts of the German government which in 1993 organized the first urban design competition for this area is centered around the very argument "that with a convincing design concept, the historical spatial center of Berlin can be reclaimed" (*Internationaler Städtebaulicher Ideenwettbewerb* 1994: 125). From this point of view, the "vastness", "emptiness", and the desert-like character of the square made the Schloßplatz a "wound" in the body of the city, a painful hurting wound which needs healing.[7] Listening to city authorities, it seems that the square does not belong to the vivid urbanity of the city; and that is why this outstanding element of the city must be regained. Exactly the same interpretation of the current situation of the square is offered by a panel announcing a recently opened exhibition. The exhibition shows a collection of proposals concerning the future design and use of the Schloßplatz made during the past ten years; but the panel itself shows only some square meters of asphalt. By representing the Schloßplatz as an empty space which is free for development the present appearance of the square is not devalued only but made invisible, and with it the narratives and experiences connected with this space.[8]

In the following I will not outline the whole discourse on the Schloßplatz but would like to depict the most central arguments. The debate and its entire logic is probably most clearly characterized by a range of symbolic dichotomies which at the same time allows an analysis of different constructions and uses of historical narratives within the debate. First, I will concentrate on the most important one and will add some further dichotomized arguments later.

The main subject of the discussions is the

8. The Marx-Engels-Platz in 1991, as the square was named till 1992, with the Palast der Republik in the middle, on the right side there are parts of the Staatsratsgebäude and of the Außenministerium, at the left the Berlin Dome and in the foreground the Zeughaus, which hosts the German Historic Museum. Photo: Landesarchiv Berlin No. 334864, Detail.

question whether to save the Palast der Republik or to reconstruct the royal palace. This dichotomy has formed the entire logic of the whole debate for a long time and includes other oppositions such as ugliness versus beauty for example, dictatorship versus democracy, and last but not least the East versus the West. This dichotomy gives the debate its very emotional and explosive force because it is linked to different historical narratives, identity constructions, and self-stagings of Berliners.

The claim that the Palast der Republik is an important site of German history was enunciated for the first time in 1993 as the demolition of this building was announced by the German government. Since this time the advocates of the Palast der Republik have insisted on their own experiences which are embodied in this building, and they emphasize that the building is part of their very own biographies and social memories. At the moment, there are different interest groups fighting for the preservation of the Palast der Republik and the square's development on the basis of this existing building and/or at least on the ideas it represents.[9] The majority describes themselves as Easteners. In the reading of these engaged citizens the Palast der Republik is a site of lived experience in the first place, and neither only an ugly example of modern architecture nor a pure symbol of communism and dictatorship as some of their opponents put it.

The logic of this argumentation is to be found within the power structures of the unification process. With the de-legitimizing of the GDR and its ideological foundations, the reference to an official "collective" memory is no longer an opportunity for those who want to maintain their experiences and individual self-representations at least in part (Kertzer 1996: 153ff). One instead has to fall back on the more subjective accounts of a "communicative" memory (Assmann 1988) to stress the significance of the site. The Palast der Republik has become a symbol by spatializing these memories. In so far as the protagonists of this symbol insist on the preservation of this building, the people engaged in the struggle emphasize the necessity of an East German identity in its own right and its representation within the cityscape.

That is why the announced demolition of the building amounts to the obliteration of East German history from the cityscape. From this perspective, the building and the political will to destroy it respectively symbolize the refusal to accept East German experiences as an equal part of Germanness. When the demolition of the Palast der Republik was decided in March of 1993, the PDS[10] called for a protest march around the Palace. Several thousand people followed the call and signed a petition "against the demolition dictated by Bonn." On the following weekends, people continued to stroll around the building, carrying placards that said "this house belongs to the people" or "peace to the Palace because it is the people's dwelling" (*Tageszeitung* 19.3.1003, Ellereit/Wellner 1996, Herlt). During the next months concerts and readings were organized which took place on the terrace of the building. The participating artists were well known because most of them had taken part in the cultural program offered in the Palast der Republik before. These Saturday afternoon events were meant to show the importance of the building's cultural concept and the dignity and significance of the programs that had taken place here during the last decades.

Subsequently, a lot of different people joined in the protest even though they did not necessarily share the same memories, did not enjoy this kind of music and performance and/or differently valued the political situation in the GDR. The Palast der Republik became the focus of a not organized but loosely structured group of people who agree in the wish to save parts of GDR history as visible sites in the urban landscape. In the main, the struggle over the building showed them how German re-unification takes place in general, namely as a symbolic "colonization" of East Germany by Westerners and an erasure of GDR memories from the urban landscape.

That is one very important reason why the struggle for the Palast der Republik was opened up as a symbolic space for the negotiation and valuation of national as well as local identity constructions. The shared experiences of the people engaged in interest groups or coming to protest events became the central moment of

the protest, which goes beyond strict political ideology. Interpreting the Schloßplatz as an experimental space fundamentally questions the aesthetic categorization of Berlin's urban landscape as advocated by architects and city planners. The "actual transformation of space – through people's exchange, memories, images, and daily use of the material setting – into scenes and actions that convey symbolic meaning" (Low 1996: 862) is thus placed into opposition with urban design and city planning.

Today, the daily experience of looking at the Palast der Republik under asbestos reconstruction gave raise to the impression of being in fundamental opposition to the dominant political forces. And it strengthens the feeling of being somehow "homeless" in one's own city. Thus, the fight for the preservation of one's own site of memory grows into a fight for symbolic spaces of belonging to the city and – in a wider sense – to the "unified society." Even though the different interest groups do not exactly gather along the dividing line of East and West, the square itself became a symbol for the dividedness of the German society. The debate renders most social distinctions invisible, but it brings to the fore the dichotomy of East and West.

While the Palast der Republik functions as a symbol of an East German identity and gathers people around the very aim of saving commemoration sites of the GDR, the advocates of the royal palace and especially their spokespersons are mostly Westerners. The interest groups[11] which are committed to the reconstruction of the royal palace are stronger in number than the ones fighting for the Palast der Republik. The way they talk about this area reveals their attitude as one of re-gaining lost space. Their central argument is mainly based on aesthetics, in so far as they wish to regain the old character the city had before World War II by reconstructing at least parts of the old quarters. They want to erase from this part of the cityscape what they regard as the destroying forces of modern, especially GDR, architecture and make invisible the "barbarism" of city planning decisions the GDR had made. This interest group sees the demolition of the palace in 1950 as an act of barbarism that reveals the true nature of the GDR. Furthermore, because the original build-

ing has not been reconstructed, its continued absence is in danger of being wrongly attributed to the general destruction of World War II. This, in turn, would make a unified Germany responsible for the building's disappearance. In the eyes of the association, however, only the government of the GDR should ultimately be held responsible for the destruction of the royal palace.[12]

For the majority of the advocates of the royal palace, the Schloßplatz is not mainly connected with their everyday life but is much more a space of historical imagination. They relate in the first place to the imagery of the old Berlin, which is the Berlin prior to World War II, and they deny the social history the Schloßplatz has had during the last four decades. Especially those organizations which have the reconstruction of the royal palace on their agenda have a central line of argument emphasizing that only a reconstruction of the royal palace and the demolition of the Palast der Republik will be able to revive the historical center of Berlin. Thus, the royal palace is placed at the center of the larger piece of art called Berlin. As one of the slogans put it: "The royal palace was not just a part of Berlin, Berlin was the royal palace."[13] As a symbol of German, Prussian, and Berlin history before 1933, to their mind only a replica of the original building can restore the city's identity. The royal palace is seen as part of the historical center with its 18th and 19th century buildings: the Opera House, the Zeughaus (Armory), which houses the German History Museum, the University Buildings on the boulevard Unter den Linden, and the street axis, i.e. the structure of the old city map. Thus, the symbolically charged building of the royal palace is viewed as central for the construction of an identity on the local Berlin level, as well as on the national level, and holds together the whole.

In order to bolster their argument, one of the associations, the Förderverein Berliner Stadt-schloß e.V., erected a scaffolding in 1993/94 which outlined the dimensions of the old royal palace. Tarpaulins with an imprint of the façade were attached to the scaffolding. The "inner courtyard" created in this way was used to host an exhibition on the art-historical importance of the old palace. It also served as a stage for

9. The Schloßplatz with the royal palace in 1903. Photo: Landesarchiv Berlin No. II, 6336.

concerts and readings. But most important, the monumental façade accomplished a spatialization and visualization of the argument for the reconstruction of the royal palace.

The excavation of parts of the palace basement, seen on the Schloßplatz at the moment, serves the same aim. The uncovered remains, which are not really of archaeological interest, are intended in the first place as an indication of the original dimensions the royal palace had. Both stagings are part of the creation of a temporary space of memory. They stress the point that the character of the old Berlin with the royal palace as the most famous and significant part of the city's material heritage is the most important tool for building up or reconstructing a strong urban identity. For them, the reconstruction of the royal palace and the entire old inner city area seems to guarantee the possibility of sustaining collectivity. Thus, to re-gain the historical character of Berlin is to re-gain the feeling of being a Berliner. They hope that the Royal

palace will offer emotional spaces as well as spaces of imagination which they value as necessary for the feeling of belonging to Berlin.

In part, these arguments mesh with the official politics of urban planning. Most politicians, official planners, and marketing experts who are concerned with the task of making the city more attractive for all kind of visitors and businessmen relate to historical buildings as an important means of constructing a city's specific image. And the royal palace is accepted as an icon of Berlin's urban landscape, even though the interpretation of this palace varies due to historical knowledge and position. But the "simple" reconstruction of an once completely destroyed building does not go with the self-image of most architects, planners and curators of monuments. That is one reason why the "official" strategy to re-gain the historical Berlin does not strive for a truly historical re-construction but rather wants to apply the image of the old European city to the square and its sur-

rounding quarter. This kind of "historization" is part of the "post-modern" design strategy which aims at establishing an urbanity which has been cleansed and made safe. In this sense, the production of locality indeed means creating "cultural-historical packages – the more or less obvious lumping together of cultural and historical elements to produce marketable pastiches" (Philo/Kearns 1993: 22). A true re-construction close to the original not only attacks the guidelines of the preservation of historical monuments but has a strong symbolical content, too, which is difficult to accept for some involved in the debate. Referring to the reconstruction means to accept that contemporary architecture is not able to solve the problems of the present, i.e. the task to construct a city which is able to confront its citizens with contemporary challenges. To their mind, the task is to find an architectural language which points to the future and seeks to find the solution in the future.

Thus, on the one hand the historical royal palace does fit better into the plans for city development than the modern building of the Palast der Republik. But on the other hand the contested and symbolically charged space does not allow for simple historical reconstruction. Besides, it poses the question whether a retro design will be read as a conservative and backward attitude of Berlin, the Capital, or even the German nation as a whole. At the same time, the other possible solutions bear other problems: A postmodern urban design, i.e. a partial reconstruction added to a contemporary building, does not easily match the goals of those interest groups who fight for the reconstruction of the royal palace. And none of the compromises found during the last years has really been convincing, i.e. a partial reconstruction and the preservation of the Palast der Republik.

In July, the chairman of the International Expert Group pointed out that the majority of its members wants a partly reconstructed royal palace and does not see any possibility for saving the Palast der Republik at the same time. In other words, the majority of this group follows the historical narrative of the old city center which should be regained and fosters its argument by aesthetics. They prefer the par-

tially reconstructed royal palace as an appropriate design solution for this square. The discursive strategy is to declare the reconstruction of the façade and the most important parts of the royal palace to be only a partial reconstruction – i.e. at least a modern or contemporary solution. This definition helps to pacify the purists beneath the curators of monuments, architects, and the local protagonists of a reconstructed royal palace at the same time.

But the most important aim of the International Expert Group is to bring another aspect to the fore: the future use of the square and its buildings. Strongly connected with this discussion is the second dichotomy which structures the debate on Schloßplatz. It has the question as its turning point whether the square will be "Stadt-" or "Staatsmitte", the center of the city or the center of the nation state. This debate is concerned too with the question whose space the Schloßplatz will be. But it emphasizes its symbolic content and asks whether the Schloßplatz is and will in future be in the first place an urban or a national symbol. For a long time this symbolic (over-)determination of the square has most effectively hindered all further planning, but it has made obvious the most important expectations the participants in the debate have concerning this square. Because the Schloßplatz is regarded as representing main elements of German national history which become visible here, it is the history of the square which seems to legitimize its use as symbolic center of the nation state and, thus, for national self-staging. But, even though the square belongs to the governmental official planning area, the location of ministry buildings, the construction of a congress center or a governmental guest house were rejected with the argument that the Schloßplatz should remain open public space, i.e. urban space. While governmental uses were paralleled with security plans and the closing out of ordinary citizens, all persons involved in the decision process assessed higher urbanity and a vivid urban life as appropriate aims for the square.

At the same time, the city reclaims the square as a space of an urban public and identity. The central location of the square and its functioning as an important link in the structure of the

cityscape proves its importance for the construction of Berlin's identity. To claim the Schloßplatz as urban space means to emphasize its popular and everyday importance.

Both sides of the argument stress the symbolic significance of the square and aim at the same time at its future uses in so far as they pose the question what kind of institution is supposed to be located here which will suitably fulfill the required national or urban symbolic importance of this place. Now it seems that a solution to this question could be found, insofar as the International Expert Group prefers a concept which unites two museum collections –the Museums of Non-European Cultures and the collections of the Humboldt-University on History of the Sciences – and a public library.[14] This threefold concept is considered appropriate for both the city, i.e. local usefulness, and the nation, i.e. the desired symbolic content the square shall offer. In order to invest this idea with meaning and legitimacy, their advocates presented it together with an historical narrative which emphasizes the Prussian past of Berlin and Germany in a newly accentuated way. The threefold concept is supposed to show the "better" Prussia, the intellectual importance of this past time while the two museums and the library will continue the symbolic landscape of the Museumsinsel (Museum Island), which hosts some of the most famous museums of Berlin founded in the 19th century, the Humboldt-University, and the Zeughaus, which hosts the German History Museum. The museums on the Schloßplatz will continue these institutions not only in terms of a built environment but as a symbolic landscape of culture. They will continue the ideas of the famous Humboldt brothers, the Prussian ability to reform itself, and they will hold up to the world – in the age of globalization – a mirror in which to discover and reflect "the own."[15] In this sense too, the square is meant to produce locality: a new German national self image. The idea presents itself as fascinating because it brings the German self image of a culture nation to the fore which offers a possibility to write home about for the majority of those involved in the decision process.

This leads to my final point: the dichotomy of private versus public which is linked closely to money and the question of ownership. In this context the main argument is that the square shall keep its public character – a point on which politicians and citizens agree in the meantime. At the same time, the imagination of the square as a "site for all" seems to fit only with cultural institutions, expanded by a small number of places of private business like cafés or restaurants which are for the gathering of people, that is for a semi-public use. In the very heart the square is imagined as a consuming space for (more or less high) arts, a place of bourgeois contemplation in the first place. And the museums concept seems to be up-to-date because of the multi-cultural representation the Museums of Non-European Cultures will offer. Only public spending seems to guarantee the public and open-for-all character of the designated institutions – "private money" represents a foreign occupation and an expropriation of the square in this debate insofar as it is investors' money. Therefore, a commercial use of the square, planned and financed by a private investor, seems to be just as unacceptable as a governmental use. But neither is the state willing nor is the city able completely on its own to provide a public institution on the Schloßplatz. This dilemma, which stresses the dividing line between symbolic constructions and political will and ability, challenges on the one side the logic of the conception of citizenship as based on the public-private distinction. On the other hand, it leads to the re-valuing of old bourgeois institutions which once played an important role in the construction of the "imagined community of the nation" (Benedict Anderson). Museums and exhibitions, libraries and concert halls are considered the most appropriate uses for this national and urban symbol, for the very heart of the city and/or of the nation.

But not only due to the financial crisis of Berlin, private donation seems most attractive. This financing concept – suggested as well by the International Expert Group – proposes not only money but the symbolic construction of a citizen who is responsible for the city, the nation, and its capital. In this sense the return of history and the struggle about memory and commemoration turns out to be an element of constructing citizenship.

To come to a conclusion: On the one hand, the invention of a historical imagery and the aestheticization of the urban landscape based on historical reconstruction are part of the attempt to re-build cities within the framework of an ever more globalized economy. A history freed from all contradictions and unwanted elements can serve economic purposes in so far as it offers a possibility to construct an unmistakable image. But on the other hand the debate on the Schloßplatz sheds light on the complex and contradictory political role of history and memory in contemporary discourses on and in cities. Thus, historical images and the construction of commemoration sites enable different social groups to construe a political self, a social and a local identity, and it allows them to establish a sense of being a Berliner and an emotional connection with their place of residence. It provides a framework or "symbolic space" in which issues of national identity and concepts of Germanness can be discussed. All these different aspects come together in the debate on the Schloßplatz and produce an explosive mixture which does not allow simple planning solutions. Thus, the constructed symbolic significance of the Schloßplatz contradicts the political will to construct the city as marketable and representational place.

But it must be asked who is struggling about this space and whose contested space is at stake. The "symbolic space" of the Schloßplatz, which sets up the arena for social and political struggle, seems to be in the first place a "German" space – for it is mainly Germans, even though they are from both parts of the country, involved in these debates, besides the few members of an international bourgeois elite who have added their point of view to the debate. Here, the politics of history are linked closely to a concept of a nation state with a capital representing national histories. Thus, the symbolic space of the Schloßplatz is a space of inner-German negotiations, a space which asks for one's "roots" in German history. It makes impressively obvious the, for a long time, official German self-conception of being a non-immigrant country. The symbolic space of the Schloßplatz is not a space to which immigrant groups living in Berlin or Germany are related to. It

has not become a symbolic space to discuss about immigration politics or the living together of people of different origins within Germany. Thus, it is a struggle about national self-images and national modes of self-staging in a very narrow sense, of urban identity and identity constructions as citizens which is located in the symbolic space of the Schloßplatz. This debate can take place without even thinking about minority groups living in Berlin. The production of locality which is the very aim of this debate seems to be tantamount to the production of an exclusive place – despite all stressing of the public and urban character of the Schloßplatz. And in this sense the "fascinating concept" of establishing an Ethnological Museum and a Museum of the History of Sciences on the Schloßplatz is exclusive as well, in so far as it offers a place to learn about "who we are in an ever more globalized world" – as the president and the director of the "Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz", to which the Museums in Dahlem belong, put it – and a place to learn about the cultural identity of the West, which is supposed to be seen as one possible answer to the challenges humans all over the world have to encounter. But in the end, the "bridge between the cultures of the world" which is supposed to be the very aim of this museum inserts difference and exclusive locality in the urban landscape of the "new, old" capital Berlin.

Notes

*   For the help with the translation, many thanks to Richard Gardner.
1. Gala April 2001, cited in: *Der Tagesspiegel* 4.4.2001.
2. "Wir beweisen an diesem Standort, dass die Geschichte Zukunft hat." Cf.: www.defo.com/defo/alfandary
3. So the name of the yearly summer program organized by the Berlin marketing company "Partners of Berlin" and the Berlin Senate which allows Berliners and its visitors to take part in the planning and construction work. The program offers guided tours to the most interesting building sites and organizes open house days, e.g. in the new ministry buildings, concerts and other cultural events.
4. My argument is based on participant observation in interest groups concerned with the future of the Schloßplatz and its adjacent areas, inter-

views with a number of the activists and taking part in open discussion panels and so on. Nevertheless I can only present work in progress at the moment.

5. Cf. Wise 1998.

6. The project "Weiss 104" was the most impressive one during the last years: The two artists Victor Kégli and Filomeno Fusco installed 104 washing machines for public use in one corner of the Schloßplatz. They explained: "Der moralische Aspekt des Wäschewaschens ist als eine Parabel auf unsere Gesellschaft zu lesen und spiegelt sich im metaphorischen Sprachgebrauch: 'Schmutzige Wäsche waschen'. 'Eine weisse Weste haben.' Cf. http://www.weiss104.de During the installation this corner of the Schloßplatz was really a meeting point.

7. Cf. last: Klaus Hartung: Eine Stadt hofft auf Heilung. In: *Die Zeit* 19.7.2001: 35.

8. Panel and catalogue of the exhibition "Historische Mitte Berlin – Schloßplatz, Ideen und Entwürfe 1991–2001", ausgerichtet von der Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung in Zusammenarbeit mit dem Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Bau und Wohnungswesen. Berlin: Senatsverwaltung für Stadtentwicklung 2001. The exhibition was initiated by the International Expert Group Historical Center (Internationale Expertenkommission Historische Mitte).

9. At the moment, the most important ones are: Bürgerinitiative Pro Palast, Verein zur Erhaltung des Palastes der Republik e.V., Sprecherrat der ehemaligen Mitarbeiter des Palasts der Republik und Arbeitskreis Perspektive Schloßplatz, in which different groups are working together.

10. Party of Democratic Socialism, the successor of the former state party of the GDR, the SED, Sozialistische Einheitspartei Deutschland.

11. The most important ones are Gesellschaft Historisches Berlin e.V., Förderverein Berliner Stadtschloß e.V., and Gesellschaft zum Wiederaufbau des Berliner Stadtschlosses e.V.

12. This was articulated as part of a discussion panel on September 23rd, 1998. See also: *Berliner Extrablatt*, ed: Förderverein Berliner Stadtschloß e.V., January and July 1998.

13. Cf. *Berliner Extrablatt*. Förderverein Berliner Stadtschloß e.V., January 1998.

14. The Museums of Non-European Cultures are located in Dahlem (a district on the periphery) at the moment. The director wants to move to the center of the city. The location on the periphery has lead to decreasing visitor numbers since the unification of Berlin. The collection of the Humboldt-University is in search of a location. And the "Zentral- und Landesbibliothek" has two houses in different quarters and wants to bring together its stock and expand its supply of multimedia use. These institutions will occupy only a part of the space the reconstructed building will offer. The rest allows for congress rooms, cafés and uses not yet decided on.

15. The president of the "Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz" and the chairman of its museums, Klaus-Dieter Lehmann and Peter-Klaus Schuster, made use of this argument in several panel discussions I have taken part in during the last weeks. Cf. too: Klaus Hartung: Eine Stadt hofft auf Heilung. In: *Die Zeit* 19.7.2001: 35.

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