

National Narratives and Cosmopolitan Dreams

Becoming a Capital in Late Modernity

Beate Binder

In the fields of social and cultural sciences, the newly awakened concern with urban space and the spatial structure of society has not only given new impulse to research on cities in general, but has also produced a growing interest in the construction of urban landscapes as landscapes of meaning and, thus, the production of locality in more general terms (cf. Appadurai 1996).¹ With regard to cities being at the same time symbols and agents of the wide-reaching transformation processes, taking place in late modernity (for an overview cf. Smart & Smart 2003; Niedermüller 1998), the investigation of how cities are produced is crucial to the understanding of contemporary social and cultural transformation processes in more general terms. Refining this argument, cities are described not merely as social frames for the actions of different social groups and the performance of different forms of lifestyles. Rather, cities are interpreted as symbolic texts which are written by political, social and cultural forces (cf. Low 1999). From this perspective, cities, their architecture and spatial order represent social imagination and political visions. They are cultural constructions, places and locations for myths, memories and nostalgia as well as contemporary balances of power and hegemony. Thus, the symbolic landscape of a city represents today's political, social and cultural power and the hegemonic ideas and concepts in history. Or to put it another way, city space functions as a symbolically coded social and historical text, and in this text, different and changing political and ideological goals, historical interpretations and cultural meanings are inscribed.

Berlin is an interesting field of study to follow up these considerations. In many respects the changes taking place in Berlin are typical for the contradictory and conflicting forces that accompany the transition from the first to a more reflexive late modernity. This argument does not primarily draw on the economic and social fabric of city and society, but points towards the negotiations that produce the political, cultural and social images of the city and its landscape. Since the fall of the Wall in 1989, German unification in 1990 and, last but not least, the decision in 1991 to move the government from Bonn to Berlin, which finally took place in 1999, the city is very much "in the making", both in material as well as symbolic terms. Since then, new narratives of Berlin have emerged, and a pervasive discourse has begun regarding the possible and desirable reconstruction and rebuilding of the entire city, the ways in which to (re-)present unification, the political and symbolic dimensions of the new capital and the symbolic economy of contemporary Berlin. In effect, social, cultural and political negotiations are not only at work "as usual" but constitute a very intense and dynamic process of reworking and redefining the city's imaginary and urban landscape. This process was and still is accompanied by a lot of conflicts and discussions about what shall happen to and how to (re-)construct certain places.

However, the narratives of the "New Berlin" speak of the future of the city in contradictory ways. Simply put, the unexpected "turn" of history, the consequent collapse of socialism and the transformation of the whole economic and

social system confronted Berlin with the task of having to reinvent and define itself as the cultural and political (the “national”) capital of a united Germany, as well as a cosmopolitan metropolis which could cope with the economic challenges of the 21st century (Binder & Niedermüller forthcoming). Discussions regarding the impact of globalisation on urban space have highlighted the argument that “globalization generates the greater salience of both sub-national and supra-national arenas for action at the expense of the nation state (...) Once primarily structured by their place within a nested national hierarchy, cities have become more influential in defining or defending their roles for themselves within global arenas” (Smart & Smart 2003:266). As European capitals are still seen as national representations, the two aims of becoming a capital and a metropolis, co-existing side by side, cause a lot of ambiguity and contradiction. These are visible when considering the discourse on the “New Berlin”. Both aims – becoming capital and developing into a metropolis – produce different narratives. The narrative of Berlin, as the national capital, is to a large extent concerned with the “own” i.e. questions of national self-representation, origin and, hence, the nation’s past and the representation of the “imagined community” (Anderson 1983) – the nation as a homogenous unit. The narrative of Berlin as a “modern” city (a city capable of coping with the challenges posed by economic restructuring to postfordist modes of production and consumption) deals with images of a vivid metropolis, of multiculturalism and tolerance, of creativity, and (cultural) heterogeneity. Whereas the national project produces primarily narratives of exclusion, the cosmopolitan dreams imagine an inclusive future – at least for those who will contribute to the cities’ (economic) prosperity. An important aspect, to understand the current transformation processes going on in Berlin, is to question how the ambiguities and contradictions of the national and the cosmopolitan structure the production of locality.

In the following, I will focus on how these narratives of Berlin are mapped in the city space, how meaning is inscribed in urban space

and, by coming into being, how local space is transcended into its respective national and cosmopolitan representation space. Whilst there are different ways of following up these questions, I will focus on public events. To explain this approach, I will firstly concentrate on their significance as sites of anthropological research. I will then present the arguments as to why we might focus on this when the production of locality is of interest. Secondly, I will outline some events and examine those “edges”, where the national and the cosmopolitan maps of Berlin overlap and intersect. My argument is that these intersections are significant spaces where the construction of a capital in late modernity takes place.

Public Events and the Production of Locality

Looking at public events means interpreting them as sites of cultural production and representation. For a long time, the dense symbolic structure of public events turned them into outstanding sites of ethnographic investigation. For example, Emile Durkheim, Milton Singer, Victor Turner, or Clifford Geertz argued that they are keys to the investigation of societies as they enable ethnographers to grasp the symbolic structure, collective understandings or principles which building a societal order. Or, as Don Handelman put it, “they constitute dense concentrations of symbols and their associations, that are of relevance to a particular people” (Handelman 1998:9). Today, these assumptions are being criticised. Whereas Clifford Geertz (1987) interpreted the Balinese cock fight as a key symbol of the whole Balinese society and Milton Singer (Singer 1972) saw cultural performances as elementary for the great tradition of the Hindu Indian culture (to mention just two classic accounts of cultural performances), these holistic interpretations are being questioned today. It does not seem to be clear anymore whether it is possible at all to “read a culture from the symbols of a cultural performance” (Bailey 1996). Don Handelman notes, pointing to the same problem, that a cultural performance or public event “among

a particular people communicates only *a version* of their social order". Different versions or interpretations, Handelman adds, "overlap and conflict with one another, in the knowledge and experience, and effect they convey. If events contain keys to codes, then these unlock many doors, as much to labyrinths as to great halls and cosy kitchens" (Handelman 1998:9).

With these warnings in mind, it is not possible to draw a picture of the self-image or societal order of "the Germans" or "the Berliners", based on the symbolic structure of public events. In fact, the accounts of public events will not serve this purpose in the line of my argument. Rather I will follow the argument of Orvar Löfgren and Per Olof Berg, when I focus on public events as culturally constituted focus of information processing (Handelman 1998:28). As they have pointed out whilst observing the "birth" of the Øresund region, public events are important agents in transformation processes, which do not follow a strategic plan in the first place, but are merely "concept- and event-driven". "The persuasive power of the concepts lies not least in its name giving magic, their symbolic intensity, and their character as models for future action. (...) Conferences, networks, and events stake out a future world" (Berg & Löfgren 2000:23). And public events offer stages for a special way of experiencing. In this respect, cultural performances or public events are not only something that "happens" and engages people, but something which "has effects on the world" and "does things" (Gerholm 1988; Parkin 1996; Rabinow 1995). It is the representation *work* that is most important in public events. As Yi-Fu Tuan already highlighted, the symbolic text of a landscape can only be read by a "discerning eye". That is what he named the "eye", which is able to read and interpret the meaning of urban space and to perceive the historical heritage and utopian visions incorporated in the urban environment (Tuan 1977). Thus the writing of the city as a landscape of meaning and the establishing of "rules" on how to perceive and use urban spaces is in need not only of social actors but of "agents": cultural representations which are to produce meaning, to connect narratives and space to each other and to give way

to experience these connections. Consequently, one can interpret cultural performances – commemorations, demonstrations, or, in short, all kinds of modern public "rituals" – as important agents for the production and inscription of meaning. That means, that the production of locality is not only based on discourse to do with old and new architecture, the (re-)naming of streets and places, monuments and commemoration sites etc. These strategies of producing meaning are connected in manifold ways to cultural performances. Public events give space to and render visible the more "abstract" negotiations of meaning. In the context of the Øresund research project, Per-Markku Ristilampi proposed to compare the space of public events with those spaces Foucault called heterotopias – spaces which reflect and comment on the hopes and fears of society (Ristilampi 2000). Thus, the space-time structure of public events allows people to join together, to confess to the celebrated goals and symbols and to take decisions regarding their further engagement, not least because of the resulting emotional surplus that arises from taking part. The special atmosphere of public events affects people and opens them up for agency. Public events produce agency, in so far as they connect people to the envisioned projects.

From this point of view, I will examine public events to see how they take part in producing maps of national and cosmopolitan references within the cityscape and how one deals with the contradictions and ambiguities between the two and renders them visible.

The Production of Differing Maps: Staging the "New Berlin"

I will start with short glimpses at three public events. These are taken more or less randomly from a large number of similar occasions taking place in Berlin over the last few years. The invitation to join the celebrations on the "Day of German Unity", staged every year on 3 October, the "All Nations Festival", an open house festivity, taking place in a number of embassies, and the opening of the MEXartes Festival, will give some meaning to the ques-



Invitation card for the opening of the MEXartes Festival.

tions raised above. All three are different in scale, language and purpose, but by questioning the emerging national and cosmopolitan maps they offer, it is possible to make visible some of the principles that organize the production of locality in a late modern capital.

The “Day of German Unity”

The “Day of German Unity” is the most recently created German national holiday. Established in 1991, this day is meant to commemorate the official act of (re-)unifying Germany on 3

October 1990. Whilst looking at “Germany’s festival”, I will take the celebrations of 2002 as focal point. That year, the city hosted the nationwide central festivity because Berlin was chairman of the Bundesrat – the upper house of the German parliament – then. Whilst a state ceremony was held at the Opera house, a street party at the Pariser Platz, a “Ländermeile” (mile of the German federal states) and a “Bürgerfest” (citizens’ festival) took place over nearly two days and offered an atmosphere of enjoyment and pleasure. The famous square next to the

Brandenburg Gate and the avenue, Unter den Linden, turned into a huge festival ground. Like every year, the German federal states were encouraged to present their regional or local specialties, first and foremost food and drink. The visitors were able to enjoy, for example, fish from Hamburg, Hessian apple wine, Bavarian white sausages as well as folk dances, music or other “traditions” from the German federal states. Each federal state displayed an exhibition of their regional peculiarities, future plans or aspects of their regional cultural heritage. National and international dance companies, cabaret, music, and folklore groups performed their programs on two stages, especially erected that day for this occasion. At the same time, the government, its ministries, and the European Commission provided information desks with handouts and giveaways for the visitors.

The highlight of the celebration in 2002 was the unveiling of the Brandenburg Gate that had been under reconstruction over the recent years. The famous German skier, businessman and designer, Willy Bogner, slipped off the covering and lifted it out into the air, so that the rebuilt monument could come to the fore – new and bright. Even though the renovation work had been finished some weeks ago, the unveiling took place during the national holiday, and, thus, was embedded in the national narrative of unification. The event took place in the presence of famous guests. German president, Johannes Rau, German chancellor Gerhard Schröder, president of parliament, Wolfgang Thierse, the mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, and, as guest of honour, the former president of the United States, Bill Clinton, watched the unveiling and gave speeches. Framed by a rich and colourful entertainment program, they honoured the Brandenburg Gate as a symbol of German unity or, as Bill Clinton put it: “The gate was a symbol of the dividedness of Germany. Today it is a symbol of unity and a symbol of hope, the hope of freedom for all nations” (*Tagesspiegel* 04/10/2002). With rehearsals having taken place beforehand and there having been wide coverage by the press, people were very much in a mood of great expectation. Finally, the Brandenburg Gate was given back, like a gift,

to the Berliners and their visitors, a site that gave them a sense of identity and belonging – on a local as well as national scale.

The symbolic structure of this event is not very sophisticated. In terms of Don Handelman it is a public event “that presents the lived-in world” (Handelman 1998:41ff). Primarily, the day was meant to commemorate unification as an important turning point of the national as well as the worldwide history and to celebrate the national self-image of Germany as a federal country. It aimed to show the progress of the unification process and stage the joy of the Wall having fallen and the overcoming of the German division. Thus, the celebrations and the festivities primarily provided Berliners as well as city visitors with a pleasant atmosphere to consume and experience the “German-ness” of Germany and its new capital.

The “All Nations Festival”

Let's turn to the second example. The “All Nations Festival” has taken place during the summer months for some years now. To mark this occasion, the *Tagesspiegel* invited its readers to “travel around the world – within Berlin” (*Tagesspiegel* 04/07/2003) and that is, in fact, what the day offers its visitors. The event is mainly organised by the embassies. In 2003, 36 of the meanwhile about 130 embassies, located in Berlin, opened their doors to visitors and provided a rich cultural program.

The “All Nations Festival” is strongly connected to Berlin as a capital city. The move of the German parliament forced most of the countries to follow the German government from Bonn to Berlin. Over the last decade, old representations have been reconstructed or enlarged, new buildings erected, and the old diplomatic quarters of Berlin were restored. Since most of the nations were eager to commission famous architects and to construct a really “representative” building, a rich and fascinating architectural landscape emerged in the inner districts, namely in Tiergarten. The interesting buildings – in terms of material as well as language of design – are an attraction for Berliners and tourists. There are guided walks and bus sightseeing tours all day long and some

of the embassies are no longer able to cope with the public interest in their buildings.

So the “All Nations Festival” is, in some way, a prolonged and extended daily routine. On this day, the embassies make it possible to visit the buildings and provide an additional program at the same time. The visitors are encouraged to get to know their hosts’ countries. Coffee, beer and soft drinks, along with “typical” dishes and drinks, are offered. Information is given on the countries and its tourist infrastructure, music and dance performances are staged and children are given the opportunity to do handicraft. Whether it is Jamaica, whose invitation has the slogan “Come to Jamaica and feel alright”, or Malta, offering Kinnie, all embassies are eager to offer some specialties and highlight the attractiveness not only of the new embassy building but of their own country as a whole. A bus shuttle enables the visitors to travel easily from station to station. And last but not least, a festival pass requests visitors to collect stamps from each country. This increases that feeling of traveling – a journey around a world of colourful, distinct and different cultures, represented by different nations.

The Opening of the MEXartes Festival

The opening of the MEXartes festival took place at the House of World Cultures in summer 2002 (MEXartes). The House of World Cultures describes itself as one of the leading centres for contemporary art of non-European origin. It provides a platform for projects and themes transcending borders and frontiers. This is what the opening ceremony of MEXartes aimed to do, too. It announced the beginning of a rich cultural program i.e. an art exhibition, concerts and film programs, round table discussions and symposiums, all dealing with contemporary culture of Mexico and the German-Mexican cultural exchange over the last centuries. About 1000 people came to the House of World Cultures that evening. Advertised all over the city, the event obviously had a crowd-pulling effect. It offered a stage for all those involved in culture (politics) – whether merely interested in culture or Mexico (or both). It was also intended for all those Mexicans and Latin Americans living

in Berlin. Underlined in speeches by national representatives of both countries, Germany and Mexico, the festival staged the benefits of cultural hybridity, multiculturalism and exchange. Furthermore, the opening offered “good to be here” feelings in terms of networking and being in the public eye.

Whilst the House of World Cultures represents the world’s cultural diversity, it also shows the openness of Berlin towards the diversity of its own citizens. As Homi Bhabha put it: “In this momentous of transition, the House of World Cultures – like Berlin itself – is becoming a meeting place for dialogues between cultures, a bridge between the past and the present, East and West, North and South” (HKW). The House of World Cultures stages cultural hybridization, shows products developed from cultural contact, and its influence especially on fine arts. It opens a space for intellectual exchange on, above all, questions of cultural globalization. The former congress hall, is the home of the House of World Cultures, was constructed in the 1950s, an American contribution to the architectural exhibit “Interbau” in 1957. The language, which its architect Hugh Stubbins created within this building, is interpreted usually as transparent and, therefore, “democratic” i.e. enabling people to come together as equals. The building stands for the long established links between the US and West Germany. Today its purpose is to give Berlin a cosmopolitan atmosphere and offers the possibility to transcend the local and the national boundaries. In this spirit, German chancellor Gerhard Schröder once characterized the House of World Cultures by stating the following: “When we say that Germany has to become more international, then the House of World Cultures is doing real pioneering work” (HKW).

Switching Scale: Local, National and Global City Spaces

All three events – Germany’s festivities on 3 October, the “All Nations Festival” and the opening of the MEXartes Festival, serve different purposes and speak different languages. They differ in range and outreach. But in terms

of the production of locality, they take part in mapping meaning, both in national as well as cosmopolitan terms. All three are based on and confirm national narratives i.e. narratives of the “own”, and therefore they make the “new, old” capital of Berlin a “real” capital. At the same time, all three refer to the cosmopolitan insofar as they interconnect the local, the national and the global. As Susan Ruddick pointed out, “we tend to think of public space as a local phenomenon, it is, in fact, constituted at different sets of articulated scales. Public spaces can disturb our conventional hierarchical notions about scale – for instance, they can become at once local *and* national spaces for the construction, mediation, and regulation of social identities” (Ruddick 1996:140). And, to expand on this argument further, they can refer to all three: the local, the national, and the cosmopolitan and make them intersect.

To celebrate a national holiday, means to celebrate, reaffirm and reflect on one’s “own”

history. Thus, it is not at all surprising that national narratives structure the festivity and are presented during the Day of German Unity. Speeches by government representatives – German as well as the “foreign” guest Bill Clinton – spoke of the nation’s fate and about German unification as a turning point in their national history. Finally, the highlight of the ceremony, the unveiling of the Brandenburg Gate, localized the national within the cityscape and transformed the Pariser Platz with the very symbol of German unity, the Brandenburg Gate, into a national representational public space.

In fact, the Pariser Platz has become the central location for staging national celebrations over the past years. Already in 1991, the official opening of the reconstructed Gate was meant to highlight this national symbol once again. The farewell ceremonies for the allied troops took place at the Pariser Platz in front of the Brandenburg Gate in 1994 and the official celebrations for the 9 November (which is not



The Pariser Platz has become the central location for staging national celebrations over the past years. The fence around the construction site is illustrated with European city images. Photo: Beate Binder (October 2004).

only linked to the opening of the Wall but also the *Reichskristallnacht* and the persecution of the Jews) are staged usually at the Pariser Platz, to mention just a few festivities this location hosts.² Since capitals are fundamentally symbolic spaces where the national history, myth of origin and a nation's fate are made visible, actually this general view is localized only in some places. In this sense, the Pariser Platz came into being as one of the most important national representational public spaces in the last decade. Here the local history of Berlin is made national, or, to put it another way, the local is transcended and transformed into the national. Today, the history of the Brandenburg Gate and its location in the very centre of the newly-built government quarter provide the "formulaic spatiality" (Parkin 1996) which imbues the staging of national commemoration with meaning and importance.

The perception of this square as national is supported by the story of its creation, i.e. its "local" history. Both square and gate were planned and constructed as part of the urban extension in the 18th century, and as the *Tagesspiegel* suggests, "gentry, intellect, and diplomacy" felt always at home on this square (*Tagesspiegel* 02-03/10/2002). Originally one of the noble places of the inner city, the Pariser Platz then became no-man's-land during the time of the city's division. The Wall passed the Brandenburg Gate a few metres west, and the Pariser Platz (which is located east of the gate) was a restricted area that was neither passable from the east nor from the west for some decades. As most of the buildings were destroyed during World War II and the ruins removed afterwards, the reconstruction began in the 1990s. It followed the guidelines of a critical historical reconstruction which were employed in order to give Berlin an unmistakable, historically saturated appearance and to support the construction of an unmistakable city image (Burg 1994). Banking establishments, the French and the American embassies (construction work of the latter only began recently), and the Hotel Adlon, with its noble suites, turned the place into one of the "first address of Germany". In this sense, the *Tagesspiegel* recapitulates: "Besides the nearby

Potsdamer Platz, the citadel of globalized urban planning (with international groups, Cinemaxx, popcorn, sushi, and shopping-mall), the Pariser Platz appears as a national forum made of stone" (*Tagesspiegel* 31/12/2000). Calling the Pariser Platz a "parlour" marks its importance for both the city and the nation. Even though the institutions, located here, are transnational in scope, importance and performance, the place became a national space in the first place. Thus, the narrative of the local history is made national by infusing the local with national meaning.

But while producing and reaffirming the national map of Berlin as capital of the unified Germany, the national is positioned within the wider frame of the global at the same time, so that the production of a national map intersects with cosmopolitan endeavours even during the national celebrations. The switching of scale takes part in both directions. It constitutes a triangle of local, national and cosmopolitan reference. On the one hand, the image of the "family of nations" builds an important backdrop of this national holiday. The event connects the nation – as unity – to the global, making claims for Germany to have a seat within the family of nations. As the discourse on the metaphor of the "Berlin Republic" ("Berliner Republik") suggests, the new capital is meant not only to represent the national with its own history but to make a strong argument for the continuing reliability of German politics and the state's orientation towards Europe. In this sense, the celebration of the Day of German Unity aims to show Germany's relationship with its "neighbours" in the European context and to other powerful nations, and, last but not least, to demonstrate that Germany will take responsibility for them – knowing its own history, which is strongly connected to fascism, the Holocaust, and the destruction caused by the two World Wars (cf. Huyssen 2003; Ladd 1997).

Thus, some elements of the festivity render visible the efforts made to present Germany as a trustworthy nation. For example, giving away old bricks from the Brandenburg Gate to city mayors all over the world is meant to support the (national) self-image of friendship, toler-

ance, and openness. But this gesture is strongly connected to the construction of Berlin as a metropolis as well. It stresses the importance of cities as organizing points in increasingly globalised social and economic exchanges. It strengthens the networking of cities as part of their newly structured symbolic economy (cf. Zukin 1995), and supports the outstanding position of cities as important knots within global networks. And in this sense, the celebration simultaneously produces an imagined landscape of interrelatedness of the local to the global and the national.

The “All Nations Festival” reinforces this concept even more so. First of all, this festival exposes the idea of nationhood as a universal concept of societal organization. In fact, the principle of nationhood and national representation rules the whole festival. In this context, national representation means to draw on national cultural heritage i.e. draw on a “bounded concept of culture” (Gupta & Ferguson 1997). As all participating embassies are committed to producing an interesting and attractive program for visitors, they offer an image of the nation as a distinct societal and cultural unity. In effect, on the one hand there is the representation of the universal principle of nationhood, rendering invisible the power geography and hierarchies which organise the global. On the other hand, as national histories always do, hierarchies within societies, societal differentiation along the lines of gender, race, and class are made invisible in presenting national history and cultural heritage.

Thus, seen as a whole, the “All Nations Festival” represents the world as a colourful rug of different nationally-defined cultures, and so does the architectural landscape of the embassies. The embassy buildings are talking about national characteristics by bringing “traditional” cultural designs together with modern architecture. As Anthony Giddens has pointed out, heritage and tradition needs constant negotiation and confirmation in post-traditional societies. While contributing to hold the border of the “own” and the “foreign”, tradition and heritage is a site and modus of societal negotiations (Giddens 1993). In this

mode of producing narratives of the “own” and the “foreign”, the design language of the embassies employs the strategy of exposing national heritage and combining it with codes of “modernity”. The use of certain i.e. “national” materials and referring to national emblems, symbols, and stereotyped national images is about the national “own” as a distinct culture and these elements, set in contemporary design languages, refer the visitors to the modernity of the nation which is based on its cultural heritage. To mention but a few examples, the Indian Embassy is built with “typical” Indian sandstone, imported from India. The Mexican Embassy refers to architecture of the Aztec Empire. The British Embassy stresses the importance of popular culture and post-modernity and connects this endeavour with an oak “as friendly symbol of Britain continuity and lasting nature” (Britische Botschaft Berlin 2000:10). Thus, while traveling through the “Diplomatenviertel”, one can encounter not only the most interesting architecture but also different cultures.

From the Berlin perspective and its urban landscape, this strategy of national representation is interpreted as a symbolic text of cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. This is how the city makes use of the festival and how it interprets its contribution to the re-imagining of the city. The festival presents, via the embassies, the openness of Berlin toward the world and makes a strong claim for Berlin as a late modern metropolis. In this sense, the richness of cultural i.e. national representations takes part in constituting a multicultural and cosmopolitan atmosphere within the city. With Berlin as Capital, “hosting” guests from all over the world, the embassies produce a landscape of cosmopolitanism within the city – they turn the national space of the capital into cosmopolitan space. Thus, “the World within Berlin” – as the journal *Foyer* of the Berlin “Senatsverwaltung für Bauen, Wohnen und Verkehr” titled an issue about the emerging embassy quarter in 1996 – stands for a welcomed and controlled way of cosmopolitanism (cf. Binder 2004).

The opening of the MEXartes Festival is based on the concept of nations representing

a distinct cultural heritage as well. Against this backdrop, the opening ceremony stages the pride Germany and Mexico have in their rich cultural exchange and celebrates their long-lasting interconnectedness. By doing so, it emphasizes the transnational space as a space that produces cultural hybridity and enables cultural enrichment. And in this sense, the opening of the MEXartes Festival points to the cultural role of (world) cities. Whilst offering a space of encounter with strangers and strangeness, cities have been playing, for a long time, an important role in the process of cultural production (cf. Hannerz 1993). Thus, the opening goes on in drawing the cosmopolitan map of Berlin, showing the metropolis as a site of cultural production.

During both events, the “All Nations Festival” and the MEXartes opening ceremony, the visitors are asked to come into contact with the “foreign” – not only in terms of the moment and the location for the event – but in terms of the city as a whole. As the mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, suggests: “In the first place, the festival opens a possibility in a city, marked by different cultures, to come into contact with the history and traditions of those foreign fellow citizens living here” (All Nations Festival 2004). Whilst employing the concept of nationhood, both the festivals takes part in constructing a map of the cosmopolitan Berlin, a map of a colourful cultural metropolis.

Meaningful Intersections: Becoming a Capital in Late Modernity

The preceding section focused on the production of differing maps of Berlin – mainly a national and a cosmopolitan within and by public events. On the one hand, efforts to stage Berlin as a national capital refer to the “own” national history and contribute to the production of a national map of Berlin. This map is centred around the Pariser Platz, expanding to the Reichstag building and the chancellery, as well as to the Schlossplatz and the Museumsinsel, having outreaches even on the periphery of the city, e.g. the House of the Wannsee Conference³ belongs to this national map as well. On this

map, the “foreign” functions mostly as a mirror for the “own” and gives way to experience the distinctiveness of national cultures.

On the other hand, a cosmopolitan map of Berlin has also come into existence. Efforts to stage Berlin as multicultural, as open towards the world and enjoying its diversity structure a lot of public events taking place in Berlin e.g. the Love Parade for the techno kids, the Carnival of Cultures – a parade of migrant organizations (Knecht & Niedermüller 2002) –, the Christopher Street Day for the gay and lesbian local and translocal community, or the Berlin Marathon. They all operate with arguments for cultural diversity, multiculturalism and internationalism. The combination of all these events produces a text of multicultural diversity, of openness towards the world and of a rich mixture and creativity, which Berlin is able to offer and which constitutes an important aspect of the city’s image. The cosmopolitan map has its centre in the newly built commercial and entertainment centres, especially the Potsdamer Platz, and consists of, to a large extent, cultural institutions and sites of cultural production. This map reveals the joyful atmosphere which satisfies curiosity and the lust for adventurous tours through the diversity of the world. The headline of this map could be “through the world within the city”.

But these maps intersect and – what is most important in the line of my argument – they are made to intersect. These intersections are supposed to offer space where the contradictions of national narratives and cosmopolitan dreams are brought in line. In this sense public events produce liminal zones. As Sharon Zukin has convincingly shown, the attempt to establish a certain perception of a landscape is one of the central strategies in current social quarrels about the appropriation of space (Zukin 1992, 1995). These politics aim at giving space a singular and essential identity and at establishing a defined use of public space at the same time (cf. as well Massey 1994). But space in postmodern (as she calls it) urban landscapes “initiates and imitates” the ambiguity of cultural appropriation which came into being with the political, cultural and social changes

of globalization. Sharon Zukin has named the appearance of liminal spaces in cities, spaces which link the global market to the local, and which complicate the appropriation of these spaces for constructing unambiguous spatial identities (Zukin 1992:222).

I propose to think of liminality not only with respect to the intersection of the local and the global, and, therefore, economic transformation, but to take into account the national as well. This turn in perspective renders visible different maps of belonging that are inscribed in urban landscapes. Even in late modernity, capitals still do expose themselves as national spaces. But as far as they are concerned, (as is the case with all big cities and metropolises), to gain economic and symbolic power on a global scale, they are forced to render an image of cosmopolitanism, of multiculturalism, cultural openness and diversity. In consequence, national capitals as metropolises are in need to follow cosmopolitan aims. And that is why the national has to be constituted in-between the local and the global in specific ways. Even though the rebuilding of Berlin and the construction of a new governmental quarter is strongly connected to the aim of presenting Germany as a nation, and even though the construction of a metropolis aims to establish new business and entertainment districts, both aims need to be intersected and connected to each other. The overall aim is to handle the contradictions and give room to agency in different scales. Public events especially offer spaces to present the national and the cosmopolitan simultaneously and show how they might harmonize with each other. Thus, they are important public stages, on which the ambiguity of the contradictory forces, encountered by late modern capitals, can be handled and experienced. In this sense, as Ulf Hannerz has named it, public events are to constitute a “planned cosmopolitanism”: “The opportunities for the cultivation of cosmopolitanism in cities would seem to have been, as such, unplanned. That would appear, for one thing, to make serendipity an important aspect of cosmopolitanism. (...) In some of the ‘cosmopolitan dreams’ of today and tomorrow, perhaps there is less serendipity, more planning; sites which are

rather more stages designed for the experience of novelty and diversity” (Hannerz 2002:10). Since the narrative of cosmopolitanism bears pervasive symbolic capital for nations and their capitals in late modernity, the constitution of spaces which offer the possibility to experience the cosmopolitan in a national frame and vice versa, seems to be a powerful strategy to make a capital. By switching scale, the events allow to intersect and interweave the national and the cosmopolitan, and they make it possible to handle the tensions between national narratives and cosmopolitan dreams.

Notes

1. Many thanks to Gösta Arvastson and Tim Butler for their helpful comments on the first draft of this paper. Also thank you to Isabel Schoppe for her editorial contribution.
2. However, Pariser Platz is under construction again. During the construction of a new underground station, a “Schaustellenprogramm” (in German a play on words for: “building site as showcase program”) is being staged to compensate for the loss of “the parlour”: During autumn 2004, the fence presents a picture collage of European national capitals.
3. This is where the killing of the Jews was planned and finally decided.

References

- All Nations Festival 2004 – <http://www.allnations-festival.de/grusswort/grusswort2003.html> (April 2004).
- Anderson, Benedict 1983: *Imagined Communities. Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso Editions and NLB.
- Appadurai, Arjun 1996: The Production of Locality. In: Appadurai, Arjun (ed.) *Modernity at Large*. Minneapolis/London: University of Minnesota Press, pp. 178–199.
- Bailey, F. G. 1996: Cultural Performance, Authenticity, and Second Nature. In: Parkin, David, Caplan, Lionel & Fisher, Humphrey (eds) *The Politics of Cultural Performance*. Oxford: Berghahn, pp. 1–17.
- Berg, Per Olof & Löfgren, Orvar 2000: Studying the Birth of a Transnational Region. In: Berg, Per Olof, Linde-Laursen, Anders & Löfgren, Orvar (eds) *Invoking a Transnational Metropolis. The Making of the Øresund Region*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, pp. 7–26.
- Binder, Beate 2004: Strategien nationaler Selbstrepräsentation. Eine Annäherung an die Botschaft der Botschaften aus stadthethnologischer Perspektive. In: Binder, Beate & Deuber-Mankowsky,

- Astrid (eds) *Die Botschaft der Botschaften*. Berliner Blätter Heft 34, 24–33.
- Binder, Beate & Niedermüller, Peter (forthcoming): The “New Berlin”: Reconstructing the Past and Envisioning the Future. In: Dallmann, Antje, Lenz, Günter & Ulfers, Friedrich (eds) *Toward a New Metropolitanism: Reconstituting Public Culture, Urban Citizenship, and the Multicultural Imaginary in New York City and Berlin*.
Britische Botschaft Berlin 2000. Die Neuen Architekturführer No. 23: Stadtwandel Verlag.
- Burg, Annegret (ed.) 1994: *Neue berlinische Architektur: eine Debatte*. Berlin/Basel/Boston: Birkhäuser.
- Geertz, Clifford 1987: „Deep Play“: Bemerkungen zum balinesischen Hahnenkampf. In: Geertz, Clifford (ed.) *Dichte Beschreibung*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 202–260.
- Gerholm, Tomas 1988: On Ritual: A Postmodern View. In: *Ethnos*, 3–4, 190–202.
- Giddens, Anthony 1993: Tradition in der post-traditionalen Gesellschaft. In: *Soziale Welt*, 44, 445–485.
- Gupta, Akhil & Ferguson, James (eds) 1997: *Culture, Power, Place. Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham/London: Duke University Press.
- Handelman, Don 1998: *Models and Mirrors: Toward an Anthropology of Public Events*. New York/Oxford: Berghahn Books.
- Hannerz, Ulf 1993: The Cultural Role of World Cities. In: Cohen, Anthony P. & Fukui, Katsuyoshi (eds): *Humanising the City? Social Contexts of Urban Life at the Turn of the Millennium*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 67–84.
- Hannerz, Ulf 2002: Two-Faced Cosmopolitans: Consumer and Citizens. *Cosmopolitan Dreams: Urban Life in 21st Century*. Berlin, March 22–24, unpublished paper.
- HKW: “Haus der Kulturen der Welt” – “The House of World Cultures”: www.hkw.de/external/en/Profil/c_index.html (November 2004).
- Huyssen, Andreas 2003: The Voids of Berlin. In: Huyssen, Andreas (ed.) *Present Past. Urban Palimpsests and the Politics of Memory*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, pp. 49–71.
- Knecht, Michi & Niedermüller, Peter 2002: The Politics of Cultural Heritage. An Urban Approach. In: *Ethnologia Europaea*, 32, 2, 89–104.
- Ladd, Brian 1997: *The Ghosts of Berlin. Confronting German History in the Urban Landscape*. Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.
- Low, Setha M. (ed.) 1999: *Theorizing the City. The New Urban Anthropology Reader*. New Brunswick/New Jersey/London: Rutgers University Press.
- Massey, Doreen 1994: *Space, Place and Gender*. Cambridge/Oxford: Polity Press.
- MEXartes – <http://www.mexartes-berlin.de/> (April 2005).
- Niedermüller, Peter 1998: Stadt, Kultur(en), Macht. In: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Volkskunde*, LII/101, 279–301.
- Parkin, David 1996: The Power of the Bizarre. In: Parkin, David, Caplan, Lionel & Fisher, Humphrey (eds) *The Politics of Cultural Performance*. Oxford: Berghahn, XV–XL.
- Rabinow, Paul 1995: Repräsentationen sind soziale Tatsachen. Moderne und Postmoderne in der Anthropologie. In: Berg, Eberhard & Fuchs, Martin (eds) *Kultur, soziale Praxis, Text. Die Krise der ethnographischen Repräsentation*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp, pp. 158–199.
- Ristilampi, Per-Markku 2000: Cultural Bridges, Events, and the New Region. In: Berg, Per Olof, Linde-Laursen, Anders & Löfgren, Orvar (eds) *Invoking a Transnational Metropolis. The Making of the Øresund Region*. Lund: Studentlitteratur, pp. 95–108.
- Ruddick, Susan 1996: Constructing Differences in Public Spaces: Race, Class, and Gender as Interlocking Systems. In: *Urban Geography*, 17, 2, 132–151.
- Singer, Milton 1972: *When a Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization*. London: Pall Mall.
- Smart, Alan & Smart, Josephine 2003: Urbanization and the Global Perspective. In: *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 32, 263–285.
- Tagesspiegel* 31/12/2000: Claudia Wahjudi: Platz der Republik.
- Tagesspiegel* 02-03/10/2002: Christian von Lessen: Ein Ort, der magisch anzieht.
- Tagesspiegel* 4/10/2002: Stephan Wiehler: Die Hüllen sind gefallen.
- Tagesspiegel* 04/07/2003: Auf Weltreise durch Berlin.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu 1977: *Space and Place. The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Zukin, Sharon 1992: Postmodern Urban Landscapes: Mapping Culture and Power. In: Lash, Scott & Friedman, Jonathan (eds) *Modernity & Identity*. Oxford/Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, pp. 221–247.
- Zukin, Sharon 1995: *The Cultures of Cities*. Cambridge, Mass./Oxford: Blackwell.