Call for Papers:

Interrupted Spaces, Engineered Traditions
International conference, Bamberg University, 30. 06. 2021

Since the first pioneering studies on cultural memory and the invention of traditions, scholars of this field have consistently turned to references to space to conceptualize their research questions. Pierre Nora's *Realms of Memory* or Jay Winter's *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning* used spatial references both as a metaphor to understand how layers of historical information are organized and interpreted, and also as a subject of study, where processes of identity creation can be examined. As the study of cultural memory is expanding conceptually to include processes of "social forgetting" (Guy Beiner), urban space continues to be a promising field of study for understanding how the contours of memory cultures are drawn (Jan Assmann) or, in our case, engineered.

The international conference "Interrupted Spaces, Engineered Traditions" examines case studies, where spatial interruption was used as an opportunity or was deployed as a tool for creating/erasing political or cultural identity. The organizers understand the term „spatial interruption" as radical reconfigurations of established spatial frames of political culture whether precipitated by war or natural disasters or change of political regimes. The term "engineered tradition" builds on a constructivist understanding of cultural identity (Benedict Anderson), but it brings into focus the complexities of decision-making in urban planning and techniques of "monument survival" (Lucia Allais) that lie at the intersection of technocratic considerations, (ideologically influenced) knowledge cultures and political exigencies.

Interruptions of the cityscape were non-linear processes leading to a variety of outcomes. Whether the goal was to enable specific forms of political practice (celebrations, rituals) or "urban editing" (Diana Lasansky) to create a spatial imprint for a political narrative, the results were often unpredictable and unintended: at times political and cultural identities were indeed changed together with urban transition, albeit not necessarily in the originally planned direction and other times spatial memory proved to be resilient over decades. In each case, however, the moment of interruption itself became a cardinal point in emerging, often conflicting narratives. It is the relationship between the interpretation of moments of spatial interruptions and political culture that our conference seeks to examine.

We are inviting contributions from scholars to the following themes:: 1. how interruption of urban place was read as a metaphor for political change 2. instances of spatial interruption as disruptive and/or constitutive acts that make political practice visible. 3. the resilience of spatial memory.

At this time, we expect the conference to take place online on the 30th of June. In case travel conditions significantly improve by the summer, the conference will take place in Bamberg. A subsidy for participants' travel expenses is available.

Submission: Please send a paper title and abstract of max. 400 words by 15. April, 2021 to Carmen M. Enss (carmen.enss@uni-bamberg.de) or Heléna Tóth (helena.toth@uni-bamberg.de).

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