



Landscapes of Remembering and Forgetting

How are some places of great cruelty or great heroism forgotten by all but eyewitnesses, while others become the sites of public ceremonies, well-tended outdoor museums, or at least enduring markers of some kind? To answer this question, this book turns to the landscape of contemporary Berlin and to places marking persecution by or resistance to the Nazi regime. Because of its past as the capital of the Third Reich, as a central symbol of the Cold War, and as the new capital of a united Germany, Berlin is a particularly powerful context in which to examine the social origins of memorial landscapes. Whether sites of torture by the Gestapo or mass deportations to concentration camps, the places examined in this book have marked the city's Nazi past, and have often been rendered off limits to use as apartments, shops, or offices. At the same time, however, not all proposed memorial projects are actually built, and only a small portion of all "authentic" sites—places with direct connections to acts of resistance or persecution during the Nazi era—actually become infused with official collective memory. Why, then, are some sites ensconced in official collective memory, while others fade into the landscape? And how can we account for these patterns of concentrated collective memory amid volatile real estate markets, mammoth construction projects, and rapid political change?

Remembering can, and does, leave its marks on the skin of the city. But in order to observe precisely *how* it does so, I examine both successful and failed memorial projects, and compare those places that have emerged into the official memorial landscape with those that remain only in the memories of eyewitnesses or diligent researchers. I find that collective

memory shapes the urban landscape in part at the observable intersection of four specific factors: land use, landownership, the resonance of the site's meaning with a broader (often international) public, and the presence or absence of what I call a "memorial entrepreneur," which is to say, someone willing to lobby on behalf of memorialization.¹ Memory thus shapes the landscape through the day-to-day practices of memorial construction, which range from international debates about art and history to the bureaucracies of local parks departments, historic preservation offices, or property registries.

Few places bear the traces of their past unaided, in Berlin or elsewhere. The theoretical framework presented here illuminates the concrete processes of place making and memorial construction in Berlin, but also promises to speak to the production of memorial spaces in other settings as well. The question of how to treat real estate with a difficult past has recently become an issue of widespread concern in the United States, for example, in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, and then the attacks at the World Trade Center, where some of New York's (and the world's) most expensive real estate became, in the words of many, "hallowed ground."² This book offers a guiding set of questions with which to examine the dynamic interactions of memory, markets, and politics in cities around the world, whether in Lower Manhattan, Phnom Penh, or Buenos Aires.³ How are we to understand the presence of "hallowed ground" in the middle of a bustling metropolis? Put more broadly, how do groups of people anchor collective memories to the landscape? How does a given patch of land or a particular building go from being meaningful only to a handful of eyewitnesses or historians to being a significant element of local, national, and even international collective memory?⁴

Collective memory operates within economic, physical, and political limits, including the four elements mentioned above, as well as broader political, cultural, and economic climates.⁵ These limits become visible in the analysis of the stories of places like a small workshop in the heart of Berlin, at Rosenthaler Straße 39, where a man named Otto Weidt attempted to save the lives of his employees, most of whom were both Jewish and blind, between 1941 and 1943. Each of these four factors is clearly evident in the transition of this workshop from a set of vacant rooms in postwar East Berlin to an internationally recognized exhibition and a place infused with the memory of Weidt and the people he hoped to save.⁶ On a sunny

morning in late winter 1999, Berlin district city council member Volker Hobrack held a brunch for a small group of people engaged in various memorial projects throughout the city. At the end of the meal, the breakfast guests and their host all decided to drive together the short distance into the city center of eastern Berlin to see a newly opened exhibition entitled “Blindes Vertrauen: Versteckt am Hackeschen Markt, 1941–1943” (“Blind Trust: Hidden at Hackescher Markt, 1941–1943”), which told of Otto Weidt’s struggle to save the blind Jewish factory workers he employed making various kinds of brushes.⁷ Curated by a group of students from a museum studies program at the University of Applied Sciences (Fachhochschule für Technik und Wirtschaft, or FHTW), the exhibition occupied three rooms in a labyrinthine building next door to the Hackesche Höfe, a sprawling art nouveau complex of apartments, shops, and restaurants that currently attracts tens of thousands of visitors to this corner of the former East Berlin every year. Unlike the Hackesche Höfe, the building that housed the exhibition was decrepit and run-down, untouched by renovators or even a paintbrush since well before World War II. The rooms of the exhibition itself had stood essentially vacant for decades.

After finding their way through a long, crumbling courtyard and up a set of creaking stairs, the group of breakfast guests arrived at the exhibition, where they viewed glass cases full of letters, photographs, and other objects, ranging from a cloth Star of David worn by one of the workers to a postcard sent to the factory owner from his lover on her way to Auschwitz. The walls were rough and unpainted, the floors bare. At one end of the exhibition was a tiny room where Weidt had hidden a Jewish family until their betrayal by a trusted friend. In another room, interviews with eyewitnesses, including the writer Inge Deutschkron, one of the breakfast guests who had joined in this late morning excursion, played continuously on a TV installed in an old coal stove. Deutschkron, who is Jewish, had survived by means of an elaborate combination of forged papers and hiding places, spending part of the war as a secretary in the small factory rooms that served as the exhibition’s stage.⁸ Originally, the exhibition was scheduled to run for just four weeks, from March 5 through April 4, 1999. More than six years later, it is still open, now as an official annex of Berlin’s Jewish Museum.⁹ But in 1999 there was no guarantee that this would be the case.

For years, Deutschkron acted alone in her efforts to place a plaque for Otto Weidt at the entrance to the building, writing in vain to the East

Berlin magistracy in the late 1980s. In 1993, however, after the change in the political system, Deutschkron's efforts succeeded, and a plaque was placed on the site. Furthermore, by the late 1990s, the site had a group of increasingly active memorial entrepreneurs. In 1997, the artist Helen Adkins (who ran an arts center in another wing of the building) suggested that an exhibition be developed in the workshop rooms, and a group of six students (including Kai Gruzdz and Ariane Kwasigroch, who were later hired to oversee the exhibition) took up her suggestion. They worked closely with Deutschkron and others, and the exhibition on the site of Weidt's factory opened in 1999. The fact that the rooms were essentially vacant in the late 1990s certainly paved the way for the exhibition, but no marking would have taken place without the concerted effort of these advocates. (See Figures 1.1–1.3.)



FIGURE 1.1. Rosenthaler Str. 39. Photograph by Jennifer Jordan. All photographs by the author were taken between 1998 and 2004.



FIGURE 1.2. Rosenthaler Str. 39, courtyard. Photograph by Jennifer Jordan.



FIGURE 1.3. Rosenthaler Str. 39, courtyard. Photograph by Jennifer Jordan.

As word of the exhibition spread, this project increasingly resonated with a broader public, initially in small groups and book readings and Sunday brunches, but quickly spreading to local and national newspapers. These activities helped to begin the process of rooting these spaces in official collective memory, in part by generating further resonance through newspaper reporting, the work of elected officials, and visits by high-ranking politicians, including the federal president at the time, Johannes Rau, and the speaker of the German Parliament, Wolfgang Thierse, as well as other dignitaries. It may not seem surprising that Germany's president and other dignitaries would visit a place where a German citizen defied the Nazis and saved lives. But for more than fifty years, the rooms had been far from the public eye and their history forgotten by all but the surviving eyewitnesses.

Unlike many of the other sites in this book, the building housing the Blind Trust exhibition was actually private property until 2005, mired in a dispute among the more than two dozen heirs about what to do with the property. (See Chapter 4 for a more in-depth discussion of this dispute.) There were so many owners because the property had been restituted to the heirs of the Jewish property owner who fled Berlin in the 1930s. His children and grandchildren, scattered on several continents, were unable to come to an agreement about whether to sell or hold onto the property.¹⁰ The years of disagreement created an opportunity to mark the history of these rooms, because there were no competing uses in the late 1990s. After much uncertainty, the property was sold to the district housing authority in 2005, and the fate of the site now seems secure.

One of the elements of the exhibition's longevity is its powerful claim to authenticity, to having a direct connection to compelling historical events. Soon after it opened, Deutschkron gave a reading from one of her books to an audience of three dozen people seated in the exhibition rooms. During the question-and-answer period after the reading, a woman in the audience compared the rooms to the Anne Frank House in Amsterdam in their authenticity and their power to convey their history, saying, "When you are really there, you *feel* it."¹¹ But neither the Anne Frank House nor the Blind Trust exhibition would have such power for subsequent generations without the actions of a wide array of people writing about these places, advocating on their behalf, and envisioning them as uniquely instructive and deeply authentic. What is now known as the

Anne Frank House, Prinsengracht 263, was slated for demolition by its new owners in 1955. The Anne Frank Foundation's account of the transformation of the land follows a similar trajectory to that of the "Blind Trust" exhibit, albeit on a much larger scale:

In the meantime, however, public opinion had been alerted. Newspapers both within the country and abroad announced the threatened demolition and urged that the Secret Annexe be saved. Under the heading "Anne Frank's Secret Annexe Awaits the Wreckers' Ball", the daily newspaper *Het Vrije Volk* reported on 23 November 1955: "The plan to demolish the Secret Annexe must not continue! If there is one place where the fate of Dutch Jews is most clearly revealed, it is here. The Secret Annexe does not appear on the list of protected monuments, but it nevertheless has become a monument to a time of oppression and man-hunts, terror and darkness. The Netherlands will be subject to a national scandal if this house is indeed pulled down."¹²

A foundation was established to organize preservation efforts, and fund-raising began. In honor of their company's own anniversary, the building's owners donated the structure to the Anne Frank Foundation in 1957, and the museum officially opened in 1960.¹³ In order for the status of the Anne Frank House to change so dramatically—from being officially condemned to being visited by literally millions of people in the subsequent decades—clearly much work had to be done. The diverse activities of lobbying, fund-raising, letter-writing, long evening meetings after work, writing books, writing letters to the editor, talking, thinking, reading, mourning, and celebrating all contribute to the landscape of material memory, in Amsterdam, in Berlin, and elsewhere.

It is precisely this kind of work that is the subject of this book. As James Young and others have asserted, no site speaks for itself.¹⁴ There is nothing inevitable about either the Blind Trust exhibition or the preservation of the Anne Frank House. As the historian Rudy Koshar observes, "objectively considered, such historical sites are mere constructions of stone, wood, brick, concrete, and steel. Their meanings derive from public action."¹⁵ In this book, I provide an analysis of such public action, but I also offer two approaches that are difficult to find in other studies of memorialization. First, I focus, not only on the places that emerge as official markers in the landscape, but also on those that go unmarked. Second, I place these sites not only in their cultural, artistic, and historical contexts,

but also in the economic, bureaucratic, and legal contexts utterly essential in shaping the production of memorial space, paying attention to property registries, land use guidelines, and other elements that rarely find their way into discussions of memorial construction.

This book reveals the hidden struggles behind the terrain of memorials in Berlin, and also delves into the many struggles that never actually result in markers at all. Previous studies of memorialization in Berlin and elsewhere in Germany have resulted in thorough accounts of the existing landscape and nuanced discussions of German memorial culture, including, most prominently, Brian Ladd's *The Ghosts of Berlin* (1997), as well as Michael Wise's *Capital Dilemma* (1999), Gavriel Rosenfeld's *Munich and Memory*, James Young's writings, including *At Memory's Edge* (2000), and Rudy Koshar's studies of historic preservation and memory in Germany, *Germany's Transient Pasts* (1998) and *From Monuments to Traces* (2000). By and large, they address the markers ensconced (sometimes briefly, sometimes permanently) in Berlin's landscape, elaborating on the story of successful projects and official memory. This means they offer in-depth discussions of the imprint of history (and its interpretations) on the landscape, and even an understanding of the kinds of debates and back-and-forth that lead to their construction. Yet in order to understand the social origins of memorial space, it is necessary to compare that which is forgotten (at least officially) with that which is remembered.¹⁶

The framework presented here emerges out of my work on Berlin, but it can also serve as a foundation for the investigation and analysis of memorial construction in other settings as well. Forgetting and remembering alike shape any given urban landscape, but recent scholarship on memorial construction has tended to focus more on remembering rather than forgetting, and on those memorial projects that are actually erected rather than those that never see the light of day. Many compelling studies of memory sites (in history, geography, art history, sociology, architecture, and neighboring disciplines), then, focus primarily on completed projects, including Edward Linenthal's books on Oklahoma City and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Marita Sturken's book on the AIDS quilt and the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and even Pierre Nora's multi-volume study of the construction of the French past.¹⁷ Taking a comparative approach and examining "forgotten" places, however, yields additional information about the social, political, and material forces behind memo-

rial construction, and places memory projects into their material, political, and economic contexts.¹⁸

In addition to its specific analysis of Berlin and the broader literature on memory and memorials, this book also builds on a growing body of work in urban sociology, where political and economic analyses are joined with a focus on culture and symbols. I take up the concerns of urban scholars like Sharon Zukin, Christopher Mele, and Harvey Molotch, who have developed intriguing approaches to the study of real estate markets and the range of symbolic meanings of urban spaces in an array of settings, from southern California to New York's Lower East Side. I combine these concerns with the theoretical sensibilities of sociologists like Chandra Mukerji or Rick Biernacki, who have studied eighteenth-century French gardens and nineteenth-century labor practices, among other things, to analyze cultural behavior in the context of political and economic transformation.¹⁹

I ask, then, how these kinds of transformations of urban space occur—how a dusty row of poorly lit rooms could sit empty for decades, and yet now resonate so widely with schoolchildren, journalists, and politicians alike, as has happened in the case of the “Blind Trust” exhibition. But I also ask why, given the power of “authentic” sites, most sites with similar authentic connections to the past fail to become memorials. The memorial landscape is not determined solely by the traces left in the built environment or in memory, official or otherwise, even as memorials come to seem self-evident and unmarked places seem to become ordinary. The “Blind Trust” exhibition and others like it did not come about solely because of intrinsically powerful meanings or direct (or authentic) connections to past events. The success of this and other memorial projects resulted from a convergence of factors, especially the four I identify above. Central patches of urban land become infused with widely salient meanings, but they do not do so of their own accord. These buildings and memorial complexes travel a long and uncertain road. Their fates, including those of sites now most engraved in the cityscape and the public consciousness, are anything but given. Social activity thus periodically transforms empty lots and forgotten buildings into places of powerful and wide-ranging collective memory and symbolism.²⁰ Post-Wall Berlin offers a unique window into these processes, both because of its own history and because of the nearly overnight transition to a market economy and a democratic government.

There are two poles of memory and forgetting in any city: total erasure or forgetting, and total memorialization, or the marking of every site that housed violent or courageous events. To begin to solve the puzzle presented by the patterns of Berlin's memorial landscape, it is helpful to imagine these two impossible extremes between which the city's residents have navigated a path since the end of World War II. On the one hand, envisage a city whose past has been blotted out by the homogenizing forces of wartime bombing, postwar urban planning schemes, real estate markets, globalization, and forgetting (intentional, incidental, and otherwise), and whose vacant spaces have been filled by freeways, shopping malls, corporate headquarters, and other familiar contemporary urban forms. On the other hand, imagine a city made fully a museum, where every patch of land or brick wall with a connection to Berlin's Nazi past is marked and cordoned off from the mundane practices of commerce, dwelling, governance, or recreation.

It is, of course, politically, culturally, and physically impossible to mark every site of resistance to or persecution by the Nazis. A memorial landscape can only partially reflect actual events. At the same time, though, it is politically, and perhaps psychologically, impossible to forget entirely and to eradicate all traces of that past, and to refuse to construct new reminders of it. Where precisely on the continuum between these absolutes does Berlin lie, and how did the city arrive at that point and not closer to one extreme or the other? In other words, how do places come to tell their stories—or particular versions of particular elements of their pasts?

Despite wildly fluctuating property values and unprecedented amounts of renovation and construction in commercial, residential, and governmental sectors, the majority of the memorials that existed before 1989 in Berlin have remained in place. Even with a burgeoning and potentially highly profitable real estate market, existing memorial spaces rarely disappear beneath skyscrapers or shopping malls, or even beneath new government buildings. Furthermore, at the same time that property values were skyrocketing and the city was being primed to be the capital of a unified Germany, new memorial spaces appeared. The years since the Wall fell have seen the construction of new memorial sites, some internationally recognized and centrally located, others tucked away on quiet residential streets or even in building foyers. At the same time, a difficult, heroic,

or brutal past is not sufficient condition for a plot of land or a building to be devoted exclusively to memorial use. A given site must also meet other preconditions.

Four Forces

First, stories of individual courage or systematic annihilation during the Nazi era do not become memorials on their own. They must have advocates—memorial entrepreneurs—and the advocates' calls must be heard. In most cases, an identifiable individual begins a campaign to transform a site into a memorial. A catalyst either spurs him or her to action or suddenly brings greater attention to his or her efforts. A growing circle of supporters develops, often in response to the active efforts of memorial entrepreneurs. These supporters, as well as the original memorial entrepreneur(s), in turn contact the press and political officials. Memorial entrepreneurs may be city council members, citizens' groups, Holocaust survivors, tour guides, university professors, or historically inclined residents. For some, their professional lives are intricately connected to these activities. For others, their day jobs have little to do with the evening and weekend hours spent campaigning for memorial plaques or sitting on the boards of directors of memorial sites.²¹ These bureaucrats, officials, professors, students, artists, and other activists have an existing (if also ever-transforming) repertoire of techniques that help to produce officially recognized sites of memory. These actors are also frequently connected to a well-entrenched institutional framework for memorializing in Berlin. Clubs, local history workshops, district museums, universities, three levels of government, historical preservation offices, offices of political education at different levels, publishing houses, pedagogy, tourism, existing *Gedenkstätten*, or memorial complexes, conferences, guidebooks, and newspapers all contribute to this memorial landscape. The physical imprints on the landscape include plaques, monuments, and street names. The motivations of memorial entrepreneurs vary widely, from marking the site of their own resistance to the Nazis to seeking their own notoriety and political capital. At the same time, their actions are a necessary but not sufficient element of memorialization.

Second, the calls of memorial entrepreneurs must resonate with a broader public. After initially being meaningful only to a handful of people (generally intellectuals or those with firsthand experience of the events),

memorial projects follow a trajectory of increasing visibility through use of the press, university courses, and/or voluntary organizations by memorial entrepreneurs to publicize the meaning of a site. As pressure on political representatives grows, and press coverage increases, the campaign seems to reach a point of no return, a moment at which any alternative use of the land becomes unthinkable, and it becomes politically difficult *not* to support a given memorial project. Resonance is also a part of a circular cultural process. In the U.S. context, for example, David Chidester and Edward T. Linenthal find that “although spearheaded by specific cultural entrepreneurs, cultural brokers, or cultural workers, struggles over the ownership of sacred space inevitably draw upon the commitment of larger constituencies.”²² Memorials happen only if they are approved, but they then can and do affect public opinion and deeper-seated ideas about history and ethics.

Resonance may also happen at the local, national, and international level.²³ A small group of local history enthusiasts or a group of students may publicize a site to the point where the district council or even state administration takes notice, and supports the endeavor. A project such as Blind Trust may also break out beyond the bounds of the local and begin to receive coverage in national newspapers and attention from national-level officials. Furthermore, some of these sites break out even farther, begin to resonate internationally, become the subject of articles in the *New York Times*, and are visited by international dignitaries. With unification and the subsequent transfer of the German capital from Bonn to Berlin, some local debates about memorialization became national or even international.²⁴ Since 1989, the landscape of Berlin has had an increasingly international audience, not only when it comes to the architectural debates and new capital buildings, but also in terms of Germany’s confrontation with its Nazi past in the “Berlin Republic.” Throughout the 1990s, the U.S. press, for example, also consistently covered issues of memorialization and confrontation with the past in Berlin and in Germany more generally.²⁵ Economic, political, and military legitimacy in the international community also often appear intertwined with questions of Germany’s relationship to its Nazi past.²⁶

But memorial entrepreneurs and resonance alone are not enough to determine whether a site will become a memorial. Land use and ownership are the third and fourth of the forces in question here, and significantly

shape whether memorial entrepreneurs will be successful in their efforts, and whether resonance will actually result in memorialization. I consider land use and ownership as distinct categories, because they function in different ways. Specifically, there are many cases where the ownership status is ideal for memorialization (namely, a site is publicly owned) but existing uses such as apartments or shops prevent exclusive memorialization. Alternately, a given land use may be compatible with memorialization, but if the site is privately owned, there is no way for the state to intervene, and it will go unmarked unless (as has occurred in a few cases) the property owner is also in favor of some kind of marking. Most memorials erected in Berlin since the 1990s are on state-owned property, and in places where there was no preexisting use. Property in public hands but already in use as offices or apartments remains difficult to convert to exclusively memorial use. Private but vacant space (and with unclear property relations, such as the rooms at Rosenthaler Straße 39) may offer a window of opportunity for memorialization, but since the change of governments and economic orders in 1989, no memorializing can take place without the consent of the property owner. Official memory of the Nazi past thus settles far more frequently on state property than on private property. Because private property is the order of the day, collective material memory has to fit into that grid. In a democratic system based on the conventions of private property, not even the most skilful of memorial entrepreneurs or the most resonant of meanings can force the hand of a property owner without providing compensation. In some cases, activists will push the district or state authorities to place a plaque on the sidewalk in front of a building (that is, on public property) when the property owner refuses to have a plaque placed on the building itself. Collective memory, then, tends to occupy spaces that have few other demands made on them, and thus on land already designated as open space (such as a traffic island or park), and already owned by the state.

Within a larger web of contingencies, structures, and cultural, political, and economic trends, these factors play central roles in rooting specific narratives of the German past in the landscape of Berlin. Clearly, the first two elements differ significantly from the second two. Ownership and land use are not agents in the way that memorial entrepreneurs are, nor are they as fluid or conditional as resonance can be. Private property, buildings already in use, places whose meanings do not resonate with a broader

public, and sites without a committed advocate generally do not become memorials. As the following chapters will demonstrate, in most cases a site can fulfill three out of four of these criteria and still fade into the cityscape unmarked.

Authenticity

The memorial projects constructed in recent years have generally been on “authentic” sites. Many people involved in discussions about memorials and historic preservation distinguish readily between authentic and inauthentic sites, the former being those on which (or in which) recorded and/or remembered events actually occurred.²⁷ There is a widespread focus on the specificity of place, emphasizing the pedagogical power of the authentic floorboards, wallpaper, or cellar walls that were witness to atrocity or heroism. James Young confirms the prevalence of this focus, finding that “some people claim intuitively to sense the invisible aura of past events in historical sites, as if the molecules of such sites still vibrated with the memory of their past,” and this certainly seems to be happening in the Blind Trust exhibit.²⁸ No other lasting uses of the space had intervened since the rooms at Rosenthaler Straße 39 were used as Otto Weidt’s factory, and their poor condition contributed to their perceived “authenticity” (a term used frequently by activists and journalists to describe the site), which was a fundamental reason for preserving them as a museum, its advocates argued in the 1990s. “The fact that the workshop room and the hiding place of the Jewish family Horn [the family whom Weidt hid in a small back room until their betrayal by a family friend in 1943] are preserved almost in their original condition in their entire oppressive expressiveness [*Aussagekraft*], inspired the students [who curated the exhibit] to make this place publicly accessible.”²⁹ One of the students who played a central role in the creation of the exhibit, Kai Grudz, explained the motivation behind the project thus: “Change is perceptible in the city every day, and we have noticed that places worthy of preservation disappear in the process. It was important for us to seek out such a hidden and forgotten monument and make it into the substance of an exhibit.”³⁰ Urban change in the new Berlin threatened to erase this and other authentic sites.

The argument of authenticity is prevalent and powerful, yet most

authentic locations slip into mundane usage. The authenticity of a site does not always guarantee memorial status. Throughout Berlin, and indeed far beyond its borders, places with so-called authentic ties to past acts of great cruelty or great courage disappear from view, their pasts recalled only by eyewitnesses or, perhaps, historians. Historical events alone are not sufficient to create a memorial space. Particularly if we follow Émile Durkheim's understanding of the construction of the sacred, no place evokes its own untouchability.³¹ Of all of the potentially memorializable sites, ultimately only a very few are even proposed as memorials, and even fewer actually achieve memorial status. Most slip into the fabric of daily life. There are apartments built on the site of Hitler's chancellery, for example, constructed in the 1980s by the East German government, and Sony's European headquarters were built in the 1990s on the site of one of Berlin's most infamous Nazi courts. Nazi bunkers, forced labor camps, damaged synagogues, and anonymous buildings used as deportation centers have slipped out of public memory. Most "authentic" locations never actually become memorial sites, and not all proposed memorial projects are actually constructed.

What of the projects that never come to fruition? And what of the countless places of heroism or cruelty—technically "authentic" in the sense used by so many memorial entrepreneurs—that remain in the personal memories of eyewitnesses and even on the pages of meticulous chronicles of resistance and persecution, but that are invisible in the urban landscape? I expand on the concern for the origin stories of memorials shared by many scholars by adding a crucial comparative dimension, investigating failed proposals and forgotten places alongside the landscape of existing memorials. I investigate the origins of sites of concentrated collective memory, and the ways in which people transform mundane patches of urban land into sites of wide-ranging meaning. I then compare that which is remembered with that which is forgotten—or, those events that are marked officially in the urban landscape with those that are left unmarked, either because memorial proposals fail or because no such proposal was ever made. I address the aesthetic debates and the existing markers in the landscape, but I also place these debates over history and aesthetics in the necessary context of land use, ownership patterns, and the framework of institutions and regulations that shapes this terrain. This approach, in turn, yields a basis from which to understand and analyze the social patterns of memorialization.

The collective memory involved in memorialization in Berlin is not solely the product of an underlying consensus, but also a result of public controversy and debate. Memory is made collective over time and thus has a dynamic quality, in part because of its collective properties.³² As extensive analyses of memory have made clear, either the past has to be experienced firsthand or it has to be narrated in images, texts, oral stories, stone markers, or other communicative forms that link not only past generations to the present (or vice versa) but also those who were not there to the original events.³³ Drawing on Henri Bergson, Jeffrey Olick and Daniel Levy assert that “collective memory . . . should be seen as an active process of sense-making through time,” a premise confirmed by the “active processes” whose description is at the heart of this book.³⁴ Olick and Joyce Robbins see the influence of the past on the present as “conscious and unconscious, public and private, material and communicative, consensual and challenged.”³⁵ Today’s conflict is, in many instances, tomorrow’s consensus, as public memorials are concretized both in the urban landscape and in the collective memory.³⁶

Urban memory sites offer an intersection of forces that do not often meet up in sociological studies—collective memory, urban planning, culture, real estate, and multiple levels of politics. This case brings into bold relief the dynamics more difficult to trace where history is not as close to the surface as it is in Berlin. To understand how memory gets made, and why some places become repositories of official collective memory, while others do not, I combined archival research, interviews, and German-language secondary sources.³⁷ I conducted extensive archival work in the federal, state, and district archives of Berlin between 1998 and 2004. The archival sources range from photographs to property registries to the records of citizens’ groups, and also include an in-depth analysis of legislative and administrative records. I augmented these sources by interviewing architects, urban planners, artists, politicians, activists, public officials, and others directly involved in these processes. I also relied on German-language secondary sources, including catalogs of memorial sites, local histories, and periodicals, seeking out sequences of events and pivotal moments in each project’s history, as well as the actors involved, and the terms in which these actors spoke of potential memorial sites.³⁸ I searched newspaper databases for any mention of these sites and was able to pinpoint the chronology of those memorial sites that received press coverage,

matching these chronologies up with the legislative decisions about the sites at the levels of district government (Berlin at the time was divided into twenty-three districts, each with its own city council) and state government (Berlin is both a city and a federal state, so its governing body is a state assembly).³⁹

These qualitative and historical approaches offer a view of the ways in which the meanings and uses of land change over time, and specifically how the patterns of remembering and forgetting emerge in the landscape of Berlin. The combination of these materials has allowed me to better understand how government officials, artists, architects, and others actively shape the construction of memorial sites and the terrain of the city. Together, these sources yielded complex histories of each site, but also revealed patterns in memorial sites' transformations from anonymous patches of urban land to places of wide-ranging significance. Two limitations bear mentioning, however. First, in any investigation of urban change, not only contingency but also activities difficult (and sometimes impossible) to access through conventional methodological channels play important roles. There is always a terra incognita involved in studying urban change in the broadest sense, because people sometimes forget, or lie, or break the law, or, above all, negotiate behind the scenes in ways that do not necessarily show up in newspapers, archives, or interviews. This is an enduring problem of urban research. Second, these landscapes are intrinsically in flux, and it is entirely possible (indeed likely) that the understanding and even physical form of some of the sites I have examined will have changed by the time these words are printed. Even as I write, once-forgotten places are being pulled into the limelight, and other sites once foremost in many people's minds are receding from view.

My research serves as the basis for a new theory of the production of urban memorial space, attuned to the complexity of collective memory and place construction. This book thus both details the concrete ways in which these forms of remembering and forgetting occur in Berlin and offers a framework with which to explore the intersection of markets and culture, not only in Berlin, but in a range of other contemporary cities as well. This framework illuminates the concrete production of memorial spaces in Berlin, and speaks to such production in other cities as well. By examining multiple sites in the same city and comparing officially remembered and publicly forgotten sites, this book develops an approach rarely

taken in other studies of memory, most of which tend to focus only on those places that actually appear in the landscape.

As in other cities, the memorial landscape in Berlin is not a straightforward result of political history, but the product of a matrix of forces operating in varying strengths and across time. Place construction happens at the intersection of ownership patterns, land-use regulations, individual investment in places, and broader political and cultural sets of meanings. The memorial landscape of Berlin—and arguably of many other cities as well—arises out of the intersection of a multitude of forces, ranging from the original event itself to fleeting artistic trends to decades of entrenched land-use policy and ownership patterns. The places discussed here highlight both the observable patterns in memorial construction and the role of contingency: nothing here is predetermined, or inevitable. Granted, no scholar (and no savvy passerby) would assert that these sites are inevitable. But once constructed, memorials, like buildings in general, tend to mask the often conflictual conditions of their creation and to take on an apparent permanence that belies their social origins. Many proposed projects teeter on the brink of failure for years, yet become profoundly uncontroversial (if also often ignored) once construction is complete. This past materializes into memorial spaces through a mixture of quiet consensus and passionate dispute.

In cities throughout the world, for purposes of remembering, people demarcate places where great cruelty has occurred or great heroism has been manifested. As Chidester and Linenthal (1995), Young (2000), and others have asserted, the unique qualities of a memorial space that set it apart from nonmemorial spaces are not intrinsic—they must be produced. The particular constellation of remembering and forgetting is by no means inevitable. Sometimes debates over sites of memory may be tempests in the proverbial teapot, bitter battles over tiny patches of political turf. But debates over memorials may also be of dire urgency, not only for survivors, but also for broader formations of local or national identity, international political relations, urban development, and collective moral frameworks. Ultimately, these interpretations of the past of a given place (and of a given collectivity) are also intertwined with visions of the future. Not only in Berlin, but also at the Tuol Sleng Museum of Genocidal Crimes in Phnom Penh, or the Parque de la Memoria in Buenos Aires, or the Robben Island Museum off the coast of South Africa, marking a site of past cruelty or

courage serves, in part, as a way to envision both the past and the future, the latter ideally free of the kinds of troubles being recalled.⁴⁰

These landscapes of remembering and forgetting are, after all, tied up with the memories of bodies, and of the intense materiality of physical harm. For many people, spirits lurk in cemeteries and burial grounds, and so must also linger on in former detention centers, concentration camps, and killing grounds, the meanings of which are marked and conveyed by survivors, artists, and historians, among others. This process can be both a key component of place making and a vital element of the study of place, helping to answer the sociologist Tom Gieryn's question, "How do places come to be the way they are, and how do places matter for social practices and historical change?"⁴¹ Public book readings, impromptu question-and-answer sessions, chance meetings, and lifelong visions all combine to create such places of concentrated meaning in the cityscape. These are the deeply social ways that places *do* begin to speak. The question of why some places are collectively recalled with markers in the landscape, while others are not, can also be phrased in the following way: How do groups of people live with collective memories? There are many answers. We write about them, tell grandchildren about them, read about them, ignore them, dispute them, and forget them. And we also transform them into concrete places in the landscapes around us. In this book, then, I focus on the ways in which a particular set of "ghosts"—those generated by personal stories and collective memories of persecution by and resistance to the Nazi regime—take on the tangible form of bronze plaques, glass-encased exhibits, and public sculpture.

Chapter Overview

Chapter 2 addresses the shifts in memorial culture from 1945 to the current era, examining the changing perception and treatment of the urban memory of Berlin's Nazi past. After 1945, the residents of both East and West Germany navigated between a strong impulse to forget the Nazi past and—at times—a powerful impulse to remember it, resulting in a range of memorial projects in both halves of the city. But what happened to these "uncomfortable monuments" in the wake of the falling of the Wall?⁴²

In the final weeks of 1989, construction and demolition in East Berlin ground to a halt, with one well-known exception. The only sound of

hammers and bulldozers came from the thin strip along the Wall, as demonstrators, tourists, and hawkers chiseled away at the concrete panels, followed by bulldozers and cranes. Everywhere else in the city, construction sites fell still, the dynamite holes bored in condemned buildings remained empty, and everyone waited to see what would happen next. The dramatic shifts in political and economic structures, as well as new paradigms of urban planning and land use, set the stage for subsequent memorial practice. In particular, the commodification of land and buildings in post-1989 eastern Berlin, coupled with new political forms, has had significant effects on the city's social and material landscape.

Given this political and economic upheaval, the post-1989 memorial landscape of Berlin presents a set of what might seem, at first glance, to be paradoxes, addressed in Chapter 3. As property values skyrocketed and construction boomed, at least some existing memorial sites might have been expected to give way to the pressure of this escalating demand for urban land. Yet even with the total collapse of the East German political and economic spheres, the majority of the memorials the East German government had built dealing with the Nazi past in Berlin remained in place.

Chapter 4 turns to new memorials put up after 1989, revealing the step-by-step production of memorial space. How, for example, can a given plot of land in the center of Berlin be a parking lot one year and a solemn memorial site where thousands of tourists stop to snap photos and dignitaries gather for official ceremonies a year later? No city is ever a blank slate, even with the fall of one political and economic regime and the rise of another, as the example of Berlin so clearly shows. Moreover, most cities have at least a few patches of land devoted to memorials, even amid shopping malls, corporate headquarters, and government ministries. Here I begin to focus in greater depth on the role of land use, landownership, memorial entrepreneurs, and resonance in memorial production.

Although most preexisting memorials persisted in Berlin after 1989, and new memorials were constructed in the 1990s, many proposed memorial projects have failed, and still more "authentic" sites have gone unmarked in the landscape. Chapter 5 sets out to explain why this has occurred. Over the past six decades in Berlin, synagogues have been demolished to make way for parking lots, playgrounds, or apartment blocks. Cellars and bars used by the SS and the SA as places to incarcerate, torture, or murder peo-

ple they considered to be enemies of the Nazi regime have been reused as storage rooms, laundries, or restaurants. Barracks built to house forced laborers have been pulled down, abandoned, or used for other purposes. In a few cases, a plaque was attached to a building façade to remind passersby of what once happened in one of these locations, and in even fewer cases, a larger memorial was erected.

Chapter 5 compares places that are officially marked with those that vanish into the landscape. The messages emanating from an existing memorial site may give the impression that the stones or bronze are themselves speaking, that there is something intrinsically communicative about such a site. But stones do not speak for themselves, and many places that should—following the prevalent logic of authenticity in German memorial culture—emit a sense of sorrow and warning, for example, actually do not do so for anyone but eyewitnesses without years of work. Contrasting marked sites with unmarked sites offers a way of thinking more broadly, and theoretically, about the infusion of place with meaning and memory, and of investigating what kinds of circumstances lead to the exposure in the landscape of a particular moment in a given site's history. Chapter 5 brings into greater relief the forces that contribute to the memorial landscape that actually emerges.

Chapter 6 illuminates further tensions between authentic historical sites, market pressures, and the political volatility of the city's remembrance of its Nazi past. By examining a "failed" project, as well as a new set of small-scale memorials, I explore the intersections of the local and the global in Berlin's memorial landscape. One example of the failure of a site to capture both public imagination and governmental approval is the so-called "drivers' bunker," attached to the complex of bunkers underneath Hitler's chancellery. When it was rediscovered in 1990, a long debate ensued about what to do with it, but the state government of Berlin finally voted not to place it under historical preservation. At the other end of the spectrum are the new "stumbling stones" being set into sidewalks across Berlin to mark the lives of single individuals who suffered at the hands of the Nazis. These stones seem to have captured international public attention, despite (or perhaps because of) their modest scale. In both of these cases, and many others, the processes of memorialization are simultaneously very local and very international. However, theories of collective memory in general and memorialization in particular have tended to

remain resolutely located within national borders, and they clearly need to expand beyond their traditional bounds. Memorial projects and historic preservation efforts, in Berlin and beyond, operate in an increasingly international context, one in which artists, donors, survivors, historians, political officials, and even the people who visit sites of memory are often aware of the actions of their counterparts in far-off places.