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BERLIN, ALEXANDERPLATZ Transforming Place in a Unified Germany

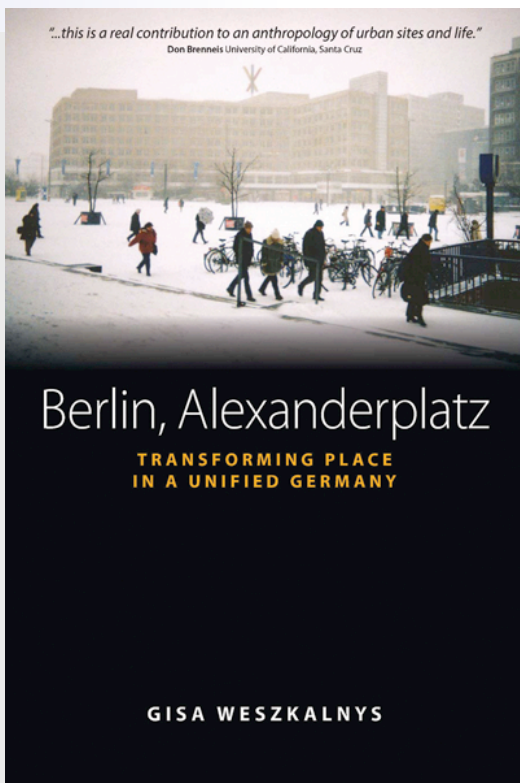
Gisa Weszkalnys

Volume 1. Space and Place

"...presents multiple perspectives with a clear focus, enabling the reader to apprehend a complex, consequential, and always transforming site as the nexus of multiple views, values, experiences, and hopes. Smart, deeply researched, interpretively sophisticated without being overburdened by theory, this is a real contribution to an anthropology of urban sites and life." - Don Brenneis, University of California, Santa Cruz

A benchmark study in the changing field of urban anthropology, *Berlin, Alexanderplatz* is an ethnographic examination of the rapid transformation of the unified Berlin. Through a captivating account of the controversy around this symbolic public square in East Berlin, the book raises acute questions about expertise, citizenship, government and belonging. Based on ethnographic fieldwork in the city administration bureaus, developers' offices, citizen groups and in Alexanderplatz itself, the author advances a richly innovative analysis of the multiplicity of place. She reveals how Alexanderplatz is assembled through the encounters between planners, citizen activists, social workers, artists and ordinary Berliners, in processes of popular participation and personal narratives, in plans, timetables, documents and files, and in the distribution of pipes, tram tracks and street lights. Alexanderplatz emerges as a socialist spatial exemplar, a 'future' under construction, an object of grievance, and a vision of robust public space. This book is both a critical contribution to the anthropology of contemporary modernity and a radical intervention in current cross-disciplinary debates on the city.

Gisa Weszkalnys studied in Berlin and Cambridge and received her PhD in Social Anthropology from the University of Cambridge. She is a Lecturer in Anthropology at the University of Exeter and is conducting new research on oil developments in West Africa.



ISBN 978-1-84545-723-5 Hb
224 pages, 17 ills, bibliog., index

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