Abstract

Cities have been targets of destruction at wartime and of reshaping during authoritarian regimes. Yet also ambitious planning schemes as well as real estate calculations led to cityscapes being dramatically altered. This talk addresses the aftermath of such urban destruction, focusing on processes of reconstruction and reparative measures after war and dictatorships. It explores a variety of ways of engaging with urban destruction, from post-war reconstruction which aims to problematize the past to memorial acts connected with the violence of authoritarian regimes. Drawing from research in European, Middle Eastern and Latin American cities, it also traces how the reshaping of cities is connected by circulations of ideas and practices. Bridging the dimensions of urban transformations and memory, it thus interrogates how cities grapple with their often traumatic pasts and imagine their futures.