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Position Paper for Claire Colomb's workshop:

Colomb, C. (2011) Chapter 6, 'Marketing the global service metropolis and the national capital' (pp. 144-187) in *Staging the New Berlin. Place Marketing and the Politics of Urban Reinvention post-1989*. London, New York: Routledge.

Colomb, C. (2011) Chapter 2, 'Understanding the politics of place marketing and urban imaging' (pp. 11-38) in *Staging the New Berlin. Place Marketing and the Politics of Urban Reinvention post-1989*. London, New York: Routledge.

Colomb, C. (2011) Chapter 9, 'Contested Place marketing, contested urban images' (pp. 270-306) in *Staging the New Berlin. Place Marketing and the Politics of Urban Reinvention post-1989*. London, New York: Routledge.

Light, D. (2000) 'Gazing on communism: heritage tourism and post-communist identities in Germany, Hungary and Romania', *Tourism Geographies*, 2(2): 157 – 176.

The texts present the reunited city of Berlin as a case of a marketed global city, which is based on the 'cities in competition' theory, stating that cities's governments aiming at luring new investors, tourists and inhabitants must orientate and formulate their strategies according to the market's needs. This has led to creating city image or city marketing strategies in many western cities, not only Berlin. Berlin's case specificity lies also in the fact that it has become the new capital of a newly existing state, which was also a big topic of a marketing campaign. These campaigns work with meanings, shaping discourse of what is plausible (the New Berlin without too many remnants of a troubling past) and what is elegantly omitted (social inequalities, identity-forming sites from the GDR) in the picture of a city being 'sold' not only to potential tourists, but more interestingly to Berliners themselves. The importance of what is being served to tourists is stressed in Light's article on communist heritage tourism in post-socialist countries: identities are in part produced and affirmed by the images and representations constructed for foreign tourists.

Overall, the texts provide a critical insight into various campaigns that were present in urban space since the nineties: Colomb claims to be using both a materialistic and semiotic analysis approach, which in my opinion creates a comprehensive picture of the city image-creating process. I appreciated that she involved the description of the political struggles within Berlin Senate and stressed how the economic power of corporations is interconnected with contemporary city planning strategies, and stressing that the city does not work as an entity,

but there really are struggles of concrete people with concrete (or even vague) ideas of the image of the city within the political and cultural structures.

Eventhough I agree with the critical stance towards commercialisation of European cities, what I missed a little bit was an alternative to the criticized model of 'induced place images'. How can city planners actually find the authenticity shared by all the inhabitants of the city? Is there actually a way of finding this, when working with young artists who have not personally gone through the experience of pre-transition Berlin? Is it even possible to find Authenticity (capital letter used to stress the gloryfication often present in debates on the word) now, after all the 'homogenization processes' have taken place? Would different paths of development change the view on the city of it's own inhabitants? I certainly hope to discuss these topics on the workshop.