

The Yellow House: forging Beirut's heritage and memory

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Abstract

From 1975 to 1990, a civil war has divided Lebanon on a bloody struggle and the country's capital, Beirut, was its main battle field. The city's reconstruction, which continues until today, prioritized the skyline buildings and the service sector, mainly with touristic objectives, and mobilized all population groups to the city center recuperation. In this scenario, a house has divided a lot of opinions: the Barakat building (also known as Yellow House), in works until today to become the Beit Beirut Museum, describes better the discussions in the city: after a long fight to keep it standing, it discloses the history of the city that will be told and, furthermore, which memory will be constructed and propagated from this house in a time of erasing the city past with the reconstructions plans. Considering the many uses of this house and having as hypothesis the competition among different memory projects, the purpose for this presentation is to investigate the memory project behind the *Beit Beirut* Museum. For my study case, a group formed by intellectuals, architects and heritage protectors is trying to keep alive the bloody memory of Lebanon Civil war in a way to forge a local heritage discourse and, moreover, a national heritage discourse. For the paper, I will consider two argumentation lines: the debate between the *patrimoine* and the *al-turâth* (التراث) conceptions, how each one design its heritage discourse when used, and how the Barakat Building protection group uses the *patrimoine* conception to forge their heritage discourse.