

## Abstract

With the help of conceptual tools from science and technology studies for studying the city, I am seeking to address a new site of exploration -- the sustainable urban cemetery. My intention is to advance the context of urban cemeteries as an engaging research prospect for the social sciences, while revealing that cemeteries are in fact valuable socio-technical entities, deeply embedded in the city's assemblage.

As an empirical example, I am addressing the Central Cemetery in Vienna (orig. Zentralfriedhof Wien). Being the city's largest urban cemetery, it offers an intriguing research site for analysing the surroundings of its establishment, cultural heritage, function, organisation, and imposed practices. Particularly, I am interested in its processes of adaptation and change to the city's current societal challenges. My investigation is focused on identifying understandings of sustainability and change imposed by the administration of the cemetery through framework strategies and active practices.

The situational analysis emphasizes multiple understandings of sustainability and change. The interview data uncovers the fact that the administrators consider sustainability a harmonization tool for addressing issues related to the preservation of the natural environment, to the efficient use of resources, and for increasing the social and cultural significance of the cemetery.

From the perspective of Actor Network Theory and urban assemblages, we can argue that the cemetery's image has transitioned from the expression of commemorating past life, towards a structure composed of networked human and non-human elements (e.g., environmental, social-technical, institutional, cultural and historical), that articulate together both the obdurate and the flexible character of the cemetery.